LIFE IN DIXIE

DURING THE WAR.

1863-1864-1865.

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ATLANTA, GA.
CONSTITUTION JOB OFFICE
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INTRODUCTION.

I am asked to write a few words of introduction to these reminiscences of a lady who, in the pleasant afternoon of a life devoted to deeds of mercy and charity, turns fondly and sympathetically to the past. But there is nothing to be said. What word of mine could add to the interest that inheres in this unpretentious record of a troubled and bloody period? The chronicle speaks for itself, especially to those who remember something of those wonderful days of war. It has the charm and the distinction of absolute verity, a quality for which we may look in vain in more elaborate and ambitious publications. Here, indeed, is one of the sources from which history must get its supplies, and it is informed with a simplicity which history can never hope to attain.

We have here reproduced in these records, with a faithfulness that is amazing, the spirit of those dark days that are no more. Tragedy shakes hands with what seems to be trivial, and the commonplaces of every day life seem to move forward with the gray battalions that went forth to war.

It is a gentle, a faithful and a tender hand that guides the pen—a soul nerved to sacrifice that tells the tale. For the rest, let the records speak for themselves.

JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS.

PREFACE.

By way of preface to "Life in Dixie During the War," I scarcely know what to say. I have long felt that it was the duty of the South to bequeath to posterity the traditions of that period; for if we do it not ourselves they will be swallowed up in oblivion. Entertaining this opinion, I have essayed the task of an individual effort, and hope that others may follow my example.

No woman who has seen what I have seen, and felt what I have felt, would be apt to write with less asperity; and yet, now that we have come back to the United States, and mean to stay in it, let the provocation to depart be what it may, I would not put into practice an iota of the war-time feeling. In thus expressing myself I am sure I represent every Christian in my own beautiful Southland.

There was one for whom these sketches would have had a special interest. An inspiring motive for writing them was that they would be read by my nephew, Thomas H. Stokes, of Atlanta, the only child of the brother so often mentioned. But, ere he had had more than a glimpse of them, he was called away by an Inscrutable Providence, in his pure and beautiful young manhood, as we trust, to a Land of Peace more in keeping with his noble, true and tender heart than earth, with its sin and strife. "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God."

Life in Dixie During the War.

CHAPTER I.

Coming home from Camp Chase—The faithful servant's gift—A glimpse of Confederate braves.

"A LETTER from Marse Thomie," said our mail-carrier, Toby, as he got in speaking distance on his return from the post-office.

"What makes you think so?" I said, excitedly.

"I know his hand-write, and this is it," he said, selecting a letter from a large package and handing it to me. The very first glimpse of the superscription assured me of the correctness of his confident assertion.

The letter was addressed to our mother, and bore a United States postage stamp, and the beloved signature of her only son, Thomas J. Stokes. A thrill of gratitude and joy filled our hearts too full for utterance, as we read:

"MY DEAR MOTHER: I have learned that the soldiers of the 10th Texas Infantry will be exchanged for United States troops very soon, perhaps to-morrow; and then, what happiness will be mine! I can

scarcely wait its realization. A visit home, a mother's embrace and kiss, the heart-felt manifestations of the love of two fond sisters, and the joy and glad expression of faithful servants. I may bring several friends with me, whom I know you will welcome, both for my sake and theirs—they are valiant defenders of the cause we love. Adieu, dear mother, and sisters, until I see you at home, 'home, sweet home.'"

"Thomie is coming home!" "Thomie Stokes is coming home!" was the glad announcement of mother, sisters, and friends; and the servants took up the intelligence, and told everybody that Marse Thomie was coming home, and was going to bring some soldiers with him.

Another day dawned, and love's labor commenced in earnest. Doors were opened, and rooms ventilated; bed-clothing aired and sunned, and dusting brushes and brooms in willing hands removed every particle of that much dreaded material of which man in all his glory, or ignominy, was created. Furniture and picture frames were polished and artistically arranged. And we beheld the work of the first day, and it was good.

When another day dawned we were up with the lark, and his matin notes found responsive melody in our hearts, the sweet refrain of which was, "Thomie is coming,"—the soldier son and brother. Light-bread and rolls, rusks and pies, cakes, etc., etc., were baked, and sweetmeats prepared, and another day's work was ended and pronounced satisfactory.

The third day, for a generous bonus, "Uncle Mack's" services were secured, and a fine pig was slaughtered and prepared for the oven, and also a couple of young hens, and many other luxuries too numerous to mention.

When all was ready for the feast of thanksgiving for the return of the loved one, the waiting seemed interminable. There was pathos in every look, tone, and act of our mother—the lingering look at the calendar, the frequent glance at the clock, told that the days were counted, yea, that the hours were numbered. At length the weary waiting ended, and the joyous meeting came of mother and son, of sisters and brother, after a separation of four years of health and sickness, of joy and anguish, of hope and fear.

As we stood upon the platform of the Decatur depot, and saw him step from the train, which we had been told by telegram would bring him to us, our hearts were filled with consternation and pity, and tears unbidden coursed down our cheeks, as we looked upon the brave and gallant brother, who had now given three years of his early manhood to a cause rendered dear by inheritance and the highest principles of patriotism, and, in doing so, had himself become a physical wreck. He was lean to emaciation, and in his pale face was not a suggestion of the ruddy color he had carried away. A constant cough, which he tried in vain to repress, betrayed the deep inroads which prison life had made upon his system; and, in this respect he represented his friends—in

describing his appearance, we leave nothing untold about theirs. In war-worn pants and faded grey coats, they presented a spectacle never to be forgotten.

Joy and grief contended for the supremacy. We did not realize that even a brief period of good nursing and feeding would work a great change in the physical being of men just out of the prison pens of the frigid North, and wept to think that disease, apparently so deeply rooted, could not be cured, and that they were restored to us but to die. Perceiving our grief and divining the cause, our Thomie took us, our mother first, into his arms and kissed us, and said, in his old-time way, "I'll be all right soon."

And Toby and Telitha, the house servants, came in for their share of kindly greeting.

Thomie then introduced us to Captain Lauderdale, Captain Formwalt, and Lieutenant McMurray, his Texas friends and comrades in arms. Our cordial, heart-felt welcome was appreciated by this trio of gentlemen, and to this day we receive from them messages of abiding friendship. Captain Lauderdale was one of the most perfect gentlemen I ever saw—tall, graceful, erect, and finely formed. His face, of Grecian mould, was faultless; and his hair, black as a raven's plumage, and interspersed with grey, would have adorned the head of a king. His bearing was dignified and yet affable, and so polished and easy in manner as to invite most friendly intercourse.

Captain Formwalt was also a fine specimen of manhood—free and easy, gay and rollicking. He seemed

to think his mission on earth was to bring cheerfulness and glee into every household he entered.

Lieutenant McMurray was unlike either of his friends. Apparently cold, apathetic and reserved, he repelled all advances tending to cordial relations, until well acquainted, after which he was metamorphosed into a kind and genial gentleman.

Thomie, dear Thomie, was a boy again, and while our guests were refreshing themselves preparatory to dinner, he was going all over the house, for every nook and corner was endeared by association. He opened the piano, and running his fingers over the keys, with the grace and ease of his boyhood, he played accompaniments to his favorite songs, "Home Again," and "Way Down Upon the Suwanee River," trying to sing, but prevented by the irrepressible coughing. Then, with nervous hand, he assayed "When this Cruel War is Over." Turning away from the piano, he went to the library, and handled with tender care the books he had read in boyhood. Shakespeare, Milton, Byron and Moore possessed no interest for him now; and Blackstone and Chitty were equally ignored. The books his mother and sister read to him in his childhood were, as if by intuition, selected, and fondly conned and handled. His own name was written in them, and his tearful eyes lingered long and lovingly upon these reminders of boyhood's happy hours. With a sigh he left the library, and espying Toby, who kept where he could see as much as possible of "Marse Thomie," he called

the boy and held an encouraging little conversation with him.

Dinner being ready, our mother led the way to the dining room. Our guests having taken the seats assigned them, Thomie took his near his mother—his boyhood's seat at table. By request, Captain Lauderdale asked the blessing. And, oh, what a blessing he invoked upon the "dear ones who, with loving hands, prepared this feast for the son and brother of the household, and for his friends in peace and comrades in war." Pleasant conversation ensued, and all enjoyed the repast. But the gentlemen seemed to us to eat very little, and, in reply to our expression of disappointment, they explained the importance of limiting themselves for several days in this respect.

As there was no trunk to send for, and no valise to carry, we rightly surmised that the clothing of these good men was limited to the apparel in which they were clad, and it was decided by my mother and myself that I should go to Atlanta and get material for a suit of clothes for Thomie, and good warm underclothing for them all. Arrived at Atlanta, I was irresistably led by that mystic power, which has often controlled for good results the acts of man, to go to Dr. Taylor's drug store. Here I found King, our faithful negro man, as busy as a bee, labeling and packing medicine for shipment. I approached him and said:

"King, Thomie has come."

"Marse Thomie?"

"Yes."

"Thank God," he said, with fervor.

When I was about leaving the store, he said:

"Miss Mary, just wait a minute, please, and I will get something that I want you to take to Marse Thomie, and tell him I don't want him to be hurt with me for sending it to him. I just send it because I love him—me and him was boys together, you know, and I always thought he ought to 'er took me with him to the war."

"What is it, King?"

"Just a little article I got in trade, Miss Mary," was all the satisfaction he vouchsafed.

When he handed it to me, knowing by the sense of touch that it was a package of dry goods, I took it to Mrs. O'Connor's millinery establishment, and asked the privilege of opening it there. Imagine my astonishment and delight, when I beheld a pattern of fine grey cassimere. I felt of it, and held it up between my eyes and the light. There was nothing shoddy about it. It was indeed a piece of fine cassimere, finer and better than anything I could have procured in Atlanta at that time. The circumstance was suggestive of Elijah and the ravens, and I thanked God for the gift so opportune, and lost no time in returning to the drug store, and thanking King, the raven employed by the Lord to clothe one of His little ones. Nor did I lose any time in adding to the package other articles of necessity, flannel and the best Georgia made homespun I could procure,

and was then ready to take the return train to Decatur. Thomie was deeply touched by the opportune gift, and said that King was a great boy, and that he must see him.

After supper I clandestinely left the house, and ran around to Todd McAllister's and begged him to take the job of making the suit. He agreed to cut the coat, vest and pantaloons by measure, and for that purpose went home with me, shears and tape measure in hand. Having finished this important part of the job, he told me he could not make the suit himself, but he thought if I would "talk right pretty to the old lady," she would do it. Next morning I lost no time in "talking pretty" to the old lady, and, having secured her promise to undertake the work, it was soon in her hands. With the help of faithful, efficient women, and I suspect of her husband, too, the job was executed surprisingly soon. In the meantime the making of flannel garments, and homespun shirts with bosoms made of linen pillow cases, was progressing with remarkable celerity.

When all was finished, and Thomie was arrayed in his new suit, which set admirably well—notwithstanding the room allowed for increasing dimensions, which we doubted not under good treatment he would attain—King Solomon, in purple and fine linen, was not looked upon with more admiration, than was he by his loving mother and sisters. His cough had in a measure yielded to remedies, and his cheeks bore the tinge of better blood.

Good Mr. Levi Willard, his wife and children, had already been to see Thomie and the strangers within our gates, and many others had already sent kind messages and substantial tokens of regard. And the young people of Decatur, young ladies and little boys, were planning to give them a surprise party. And among these loving attentions was a visit from King, the faithful.

The flowers bloomed prettier, the birds sang sweeter, because of their presence; but time waits for no man, and we were admonished by low conversations and suggestive looks that these men, officers in the army of the Confederacy, were planning their departure.

Many amusing incidents, as well as those of a horrible character, were told of their prison life in Camp Chase. To illustrate the patriotism of Southern men, Col. Deshler, as a prisoner of war, figured conspicuously; and many anecdotes ludicrous and pathetic, quaint and original, revealed the deep devotion of his love for the South. In one of these word-paintings, he was represented as sitting on his legs, darning the seat of his pantaloons, when a feminine curiosity seeker came along. When she perceived his occupation, she said with a leer that would have done credit to Lucifer:

"You rebels find it pretty hard work to keep your gray duds in order, don't you?"

Without looking at her, he whistled in musical cadence the contempt he felt for her and her ilk; and

the imprecations, he would not have expressed in words, were so distinct and well modulated as to leave no doubt as to their meaning.

The time had come for the nature of the low-toned conversations, referred to, to be revealed, and Thomie was chosen to make the revelation. Planning to have mother and sisters present, he discussed the duties of patriotism, and the odium men brought upon themselves by not discharging those duties. Making the matter personal, he referred to himself and friends, to the great pleasure and personal benefit derived from a week's sojourn at home; of the love for us that would ever linger in their hearts; of the pleasant memories that would nerve them in future conflicts; and in conclusion told us that to-morrow they would leave us to join their command at Tullahoma, where the decimated regiment was to stay until its numbers were sufficiently recruited for service.

Instead of yielding to grief, we repressed every evidence of it, and spoke only words of encouragement to these noble men who had never shirked a duty, or sought bomb-proof positions in the army of the Confederacy. After this interview, Thomie abandoned himself to cheerfulness, to almost boyish gaiety. He kept very close to his mother. She had grown old so rapidly since the troubles began, that she needed all the support that could be given her in this ordeal. This he perceived without seeming to do so, and left nothing within his power undone for her encouragement. He even discussed with perfect

equanimity the probability, yea, the more than probability, of his getting killed in battle; for, said he, "he that taketh up the sword, by the sword shall he perish." And, he added, "strong, irrepressible convictions constrained me to enter the army in defense of mother, home and country. My vote was cast for the secession of my state from the union of states which existed only in name, and I would not have accepted any position tendered me which would have secured me from the dangers involved by that step. I was willing to give my life, if need be, for the cause which should be dear to every Southern heart."

Every one present responded to these noble sentiments, for were we not soldiers, too, working for the same noble cause, and aiding and abetting those who fought its battles?

Before retiring to our rooms, Captain Lauderdale, as usual, led in prayer, fervent deep and soul-supporting, more for our mother and ourselves than for himself and his comrades in their perilous positions. And dear Thomie, whom I had never heard pray since his cradle invocation,

> "Now I lay me down to sleep,
> I pray the Lord my soul to keep,"

finished in words thrilling and beautiful. The effect was electrical. Tears and sobs were no longer repressed, and all found relief from long pent-up feeling. O, the blessedness of tears!

Morning came, clear as crystal, and cool and exhilarating. The household were up at early dawn. A

strong decoction of coffee was prepared, and fresh cream toast and boiled eggs, meat relishes, being served cold. Knapsacks—there were knapsacks now—were packed, and blankets rolled and buckled in straps, and our ebony Confederates, Toby and Telitha, stood ready to convey them to the depot. In order to meet the morning train at seven o'clock we started, but the services of Toby and Telitha were not accepted. The gentlemen said it would never do for soldiers to start off to report for service with negroes carrying their knapsacks and blankets. They had no muskets to shoulder, for of these they had been divested at Arkansas Post, months ago, when captured by the enemy.

Lieutenant McMurray, who was in very feeble health, announced himself unable to report for duty, and remained with us several weeks longer.

The parting at the depot did not betray the grief, almost without earthly hope, that was rankling in our hearts, and the "good-bye's" and "God bless you's" were uttered with a composure we little thought at our command.

As the time of his departure had drawn near, Thomie had sought opportunities to tell me much of the young girl in Texas, who had healed the lacerations of his youthful heart, and won the admiration of his manhood, and whom he had made his wife. Upon her devotion he dwelt with peculiar pathos and gratitude; and he concluded these conversations with the request that under any and all circumstances I

would be a sister to her. On one of these occasions we were standing near the piano, and, when we ceased to talk, Thomie opened it, and in tones that came from the heart, and that were tremulous with emotion, he sang, "When this cruel war is over."

> Why sings the swan its sweetest notes,
> When life is near its close?

Since writing the foregoing, I have had access to a journal, kept during the war by my half-sister, Missouri Stokes, in which are the following entries of historic value: "On the 11th of January, 1863, Arkansas Post, the fort where Thomie was stationed, fell into the hands of the Yankees. General Churchhill's whole command, numbering about four thousand, were captured, a few being killed and wounded. We knew that Thomie, if alive, must be a prisoner, but could hear no tidings from him. Our suspense continued until the latter part of March, when ma received a letter from our loved one, written at Camp Chase, (military prison) Ohio, February 10th. This letter she forwarded to me, and I received it, March 21st, with heartfelt emotions of gratitude to Him who had preserved his life. A few weeks afterwards another letter came, saying he expected to be exchanged in a few days, and then for several weeks we heard no more."

From this journal I learn that the date of Thomie's arrival was May 16th, 1863. My sister wrote of him: "He seemed much changed, although only four years and a half had elapsed since we parted. He looked

older, thinner, and more care-worn, and gray hairs are sprinkled among his dark brown curls. His health had been poor in the army, and then, when he left Camp Chase, he, as well as the other prisoners, was stripped by the Yankees of nearly all his warm clothing. He left the prison in April, and was exchanged at City Point. How strange the dealings of Providence. Truly was he led by a way he knew not. He went out to Texas by way of the West, and returned home from the East. God be thanked for preserving his life, when so many of his comrades have died. He is a miracle of mercy. After their capture, they were put on boats from which Yankee small-pox patients had been taken. Some died of small-pox, but Thomie had had varioloid and so escaped. He was crowded on a boat with twenty-two hundred, and scarcely had standing room. Many died on the passage up the river, one poor fellow with his head in Tommy's lap. May he never go through similar scenes again!"

From this same journal I take the following, written after Missouri's return to the school she was teaching in Bartow county:

"Sabbath morning, June 14th. Went to Cartersville to church. Some time elapsed before preaching commenced. A soldier came in, sat down rather behind me, then, rising, approached me. *It was Thomie.* I soon found (for we did talk in church) that he had an order to join Kirby Smith, with a recommendation from Bragg that he be allowed to

recruit for his regiment. Fortunately there was a vacant seat in the carriage, so he went out home with us. Monday 15th, Tommy left. I rode with him a little beyond the school house, then took my books and basket, and with one kiss, and, on my part, a tearful good-bye, we parted. As I walked slowly back, I felt so lonely. He had been with me just long enough for me to realize a brother's kind protection, and now he's torn away, and I'm again alone. I turned and looked. He was driving slowly along—he turned a corner and was hidden from my view. Shall I see him no more? Or shall we meet again? God only knows. After a fit of weeping, and one earnest prayer for him, I turned my steps to my little school."

And thus our brother went back to Texas, and gladly, too, for was not his Mary there?

Of Thomie's recall to join his command at Dalton; of his arrival at home the next February, on his way to "the front;" of his participation in the hard-fought battles that contested the way to Atlanta; and of his untimely death at the fatal battle of Franklin, Tennessee, I may speak hereafter.

Even in the spring and summer of 1863, the shadows began to deepen, and to hearts less sanguine than mine, affairs were assuming a gloomy aspect. I notice in this same journal from which I have quoted the foregoing extracts, the following:

"Our fallen braves, how numerous! Among our generals, Zollicoffer, Ben McCulloch, Albert Sidney

Johnson, and the saintly dauntless Stonewall Jackson, are numbered with the dead; while scarcely a household in our land does not mourn the loss of a brave husband and father, son or brother."

CHAPTER II.

SOME SOCIAL FEATURES.

Morgan's Men rendezvous near Decatur—Waddell's Artillery—Visits from the Texans—Surgeon Haynie and his Song.

In the winter of 1864 there seems to have been a lull of hostilities between the armies at "the front." Morgan's men were rendezvousing near Decatur. Their brave and dashing chief had been captured, but had made his escape from the Ohio penitentiary, and was daily expected. Some artillery companies were camping near, among them Waddell's. There was also a conscript camp within a mile or two; so it is not to be wondered at that the young ladies of Decatur availed themselves in a quiet way of the social enjoyment the times afforded, and that there were little gatherings at private houses at which "Morgan's men" and the other soldiers were frequently represented.

Our brother was absent in Texas, where he had been assigned to duty, but my sister was at home, and many an hour's entertainment her music gave that winter to the soldiers and to the young people of Decatur. My mother's hospitality was proverbial,

and much of our time these wintry months was spent in entertaining our soldier guests, and in ministering to the sick in the Atlanta hospitals, and in the camps and temporary hospitals about Decatur.

So near were we now to "the front," (about a hundred miles distant), that several of my brother's Texas comrades obtained furloughs and came to see us. Among these were Lieutenants Prendergast and Jewell, Captain Leonard and Lieutenant Collins, Captain Bennett and Lieutenant Donathan. They usually had substantial boots made while here, by Smith the Decatur boot and shoe maker, which cost less than those they could have bought in Atlanta.

We received some very pleasant calls from Morgan's men and Waddell's Artillery. Among the latter we have always remembered a young man from Alabama, James Duncan Calhoun, of remarkable intellectual ability, refreshing candor, and refinement of manner. Ever since the war, Mr. Calhoun has devoted himself to journalism. Among the former, we recall Lieutenant Adams, Messrs. Gill, Dupries, Clinkinbeard, Steele, Miller, Fortune, Rowland, Baker and Dr. Lewis. These gentlemen were courteous and intelligent, and evidently came of excellent Kentucky and Tennessee families.

One evening several of these gentlemen had taken tea with us, and after supper the number of our guests was augmented by the coming of Dr. Ruth, of Kentucky, and Dr. H. B. Haynie, surgeon of the 14th Tennessee Cavalry. Dr. Haynie was an elderly, gray

haired man, of fine presence, and with the courtly manners of the old school. On being unanimously requested, he sang us a song entitled: "The Wailings at Fort Delaware," which he had composed when an inmate of that wretched prison. As one of the gentlemen remarked, "there is more truth than poetry in it:" yet there are in it some indications of poetic genius, and Dr. Haynie sang it with fine effect.

"THE WAILINGS AT FORT DELAWARE."

By B. H. HAYNIE, Surgeon 14th Tennessee Cavalry, (Morgan's Division.)

Oh! here we are confined at Fort Delaware,
With nothing to drink but a little lager beer,
Infested by vermin as much as we can bear;
Oh Jeff. can't you help us to get away from here?

CHORUS—

And its home, dearest home, the place I ought to be,
Home, sweet home, way down in Tennessee,
Where the ash and the oak and the bonny willow tree,
Are all growing green way down in Tennessee.

The Island itself will do well enough,
But the flat-footed Dutch are filthy and rough,
Oh! take us away from the vandal clan,
Down into Dixie among gentlemen.

CHORUS.—And its home, dearest home, etc.

Spoiled beef and bad soup is our daily fare,
And to complain is more than any dare;
They will buck us and gag us, and cast us in a cell,
There to bear the anguish and torments of hell.

CHORUS—

The den for our eating is anything but clean,
And the filth upon the tables is plainly to be seen,
And the smell of putrefaction rises on the air.
"To fill out the bill" of our daily fare.

CHORUS—

*"The sick are well treated," as Southern surgeons say,
"And the losses by death are scarcely four per day;
It's diarrhœa mixture for scurvy and small-pox,
And every other disease of Pandora's box.

CHORUS—

Oh! look at the graveyard on the Jersey shore,
At the hundreds and the thousands who'll return no more;
Oh, could they come back to testify—
Against the lying devils, and live to see them die!

CHORUS—

*"Our kindness to prisoners you cannot deny,
For we have the proof at hand upon which you may rely;
It's no Dutch falsehood, nor a Yankee trick,
But from Southern surgeons who daily see the sick."

CHORUS—

Our chaplain, whose heart was filled with heavenly joys,
Asked leave to pray and preach to Southern boys;
"Oh, no!" says the General, "you are not the man,
You are a Southern rebel, the vilest of your clan!"

CHORUS—

Oh, speak out, young soldier, and let your country hear,
All about your treatment at Fort Delaware;
How they worked you in their wagons when weary and sad,
With only half rations, when plenty they had.

CHORUS—

The barracks were crowded to an overflow,
Without a single comfort on the soldier to bestow;
Oh, there they stood shivering in hopeless despair,
With insufficient diet or clothing to wear!

CHORUS—

The mother stood weeping in sorrows of woe,
Mingling her tears with the waters that flow;
Her son was expiring at Fort Delaware,
Which could have been avoided with prudence and care.

CHORUS—

Oh! take off my fetters and let me go free,
To roam o'er the mountains of old Tennessee;
To bathe in her waters and breathe her balmy air,
And look upon her daughters so lovely and fair.

CHORUS—

Then, cheer up, my brave boys, your country will be free,
Your battles will be fought by Generals Bragg and Lee;
And the Yankees will fly with trembling and fear,
And we'll return to our wives and sweethearts so dear.

CHORUS—

And it's home, dearest home, the place I ought to be,
Home, sweet home, way down in Tennessee,
Where the ash and the oak, and the bonny willow tree,
Are all growing green way down in Tennessee.

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*The fifth and seventh verses are a criticism upon four Southern surgeons, who gave the Federal authorities a certificate that our prisoners were well treated, and our sick well cared for, and that the average loss by death was only four per day.

CHAPTER III.

THOMIE'S SECOND HOME COMING.

He leaves for "the front"—His Christian labors in camp—He describes the Battle of New Hope Church—The great revival in Johnston's Army.

EARLY one morning in the February of the winter just referred to (that of 1864), as my sister lay awake, she heard some one step upon the portico and knock. As Toby opened the door, she heard him exclaim: "Why howd'y, Marse Thomie!" Her first thought was "now he is back, just in time to be in the battle!" for a resumption of hostilities was daily looked for near Dalton. We were all greatly surprised at Thomie's arrival on this side of the Mississippi, as only a few days before we had received a letter from him, written, it is true, so long ago as the November before, saying he had been assigned to duty out in Texas by General Henry McCulloch. But the consolidation of the regiments in Granberry's brigade having been broken up, he had been ordered back to rejoin his old command. He had left Marshall, Texas, the 28th of January, having made the trip in one month, and having walked four hundred miles of the way. Under the circumstances, we were both

glad and sorrowful at his return. After a stay of three days, he left us for "the front." In the early morning of February 29th, we went with him to the depot, the last time we four were ever together. Parting from him was a bitter trial to our mother, who wept silently as we walked back to the desolate home, no longer gladdened by the sunny presence of the only son and brother. Perhaps nothing will give a more graphic impression of some phases of army life at this time, nor a clearer insight into our brother's character, than a few extracts from his letters written at this period to his sister Missouri, and preserved by her to this day:

"Dalton, Ga., March 15th, 1864.— * * * Our regiment takes its old organization as the 10th Texas, and Colonel Young has been despatched to Texas to gather all the balance, under an order from the war department. We are now in Dalton doing provost duty (our regiment), which is very unpleasant duty. It is my business to examine all papers whenever the cars arrive, and its very disagreeable to have to arrest persons who haven't proper papers. The regulations about the town are very strict. No one under a brigadier general can pass without approved papers. My guard arrested General Johnston himself, day before yesterday. Not knowing him they wouldn't take his word for it, but demanded his papers. The old General, very good humoredly, showed them some orders he had issued himself, and being satisfied, they let him pass. He took it good

humoredly, while little colonels and majors become very indignant and wrathy under such circumstances. From which we learn, first, the want of good common sense, and, secondly, that a great man is an humble man, and does not look with contempt upon his inferiors in rank, whatsoever that rank may be.

"There is a very interesting meeting in progress here. I get to go every other night. I have seen several baptized since I have been here. There are in attendance every evening from six to seven hundred soldiers. There are many who go to the auxious seat. Three made a profession of religion night before last. I am going to-night. There seems to be a deep interest taken and God grant the good work may go on, until the whole army may be made to feel where they stand before their Maker. Write soon.

Your affectionate brother,

TOM STOKES."

From another letter we take the following:

"Near Dalton, April 5th, 1864.—We have had for some weeks back, very unsettled weather, which has rendered it very disagreeable, though we haven't suffered; we have an old tent which affords a good deal of protection from the weather. It has also interfered some with our meetings, though there is preaching nearly every night that there is not rain. Brother Hughes came up and preached for us last Friday night and seemed to give general satisfaction. He was plain and practical, which is the only kind of

preaching that does good in the army. He promised to come back again. I like him very much. Another old brother, named Campbell, whom I heard when I was a boy, preached for us on Sabbath evening. There was much feeling, and at the close of the services he invited mourners to the anxious seat, and I shall never forget that blessed half hour that followed; from every part of that great congregation they came, many with streaming eyes came; and, as they gave that old patriarch their hands, asked that God's people would pray for them. Yes, men who never shrank in battle from any responsibility, came forward weeping. Such is the power of the Gospel of Christ when preached in its purity. Oh, that all ministers of Christ could, or would, realize the great responsibility resting upon them as His ambassadors. Sabbath night we had services again, and also last night, both well attended, and to-night, weather permitting, I will preach. God help me and give me grace from on high, that I may be enabled, as an humble instrument in His hands, to speak the truth as it is in Jesus, for 'none but Jesus, none but Jesus, can do helpless sinners good.' I preached last Sabbath was too weeks ago to a large and attentive congregation. There seemed to be much seriousness, and although much embarrassed, yet I tried, under God, to feel that I was but in the discharge of my duty; and may I ever be found battling for my Savior. Yes, my sister, I had rather be an humble follower of Christ than to wear the crown

of a monarch. Remember me at all times at a Throne of Grace, that my life may be spared to become a useful minister of Christ.

"Since my return we have established a prayer-meeting in our company, or, rather, a kind of family service, every night after roll-call. There is one other company which has prayer every night. Captain F. is very zealous. There are four in our company who pray in public—one sergeant, a private, Captain F. and myself. We take it time about. We have cleared up a space, fixed a stand and seats, and have a regular preaching place. I have never seen such a spirit as there is now in the army. Religion is the theme. Everywhere, you hear around the campfires at night the sweet songs of Zion. This spirit pervades the whole army. God is doing a glorious work, and I believe it is but the beautiful prelude to peace. I feel confident that if the enemy should attempt to advance, that God will fight our battles for us, and the boastful foe be scattered and severely rebuked.

"I witnessed a scene the other evening, which did my heart good—the baptism of three men in the creek near the encampment. To see those hardy soldiers taking up their cross and following their Master in His ordinance, being buried with Him in baptism, was indeed a beautiful sight. I really believe, Missouri, that there is more religion now in the army than among the thousands of skulkers, exempts and speculators at home. There are but few now but

who will talk freely with you upon the subject of their soul's salvation. What a change, what a change! when one year ago card playing and profane language seemed to be the order of the day. Now, what is the cause of this change? Manifestly the working of God's spirit. He has chastened His people, and this manifestation of His love seems to be an earnest of the good things in store for us in not a far away future. 'Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.' Let all the people at home now, in unison with the army, humbly bow, acknowledge the afflicting hand of the Almighty, ask Him to remove the curse upon His own terms, and soon we will hear, so far as our Nation is concerned, 'Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men!'

"I received the articles ma sent by Brother Hughes, which were much relished on the top of the coarse fare of the army. * * * Write me often. God bless you in your labors to do good.

"Your affectionate brother,

T. J. STOKES."

From another of those timed-stained, but precious letters, we cull the following, under the heading of:

"In Camp, Near Dalton, Ga., April 18, 1864.—* * * The good work still goes on here. Thirty men were baptized at the creek below our brigade yesterday, and I have heard from several other brigades in which the proportion is equally large (though the thirty-one were not all members of this brigade).

Taking the proportion in the whole army as heard from (and I have only heard from a part of one corps), there must have been baptized yesterday, 150 persons—maybe 200. This revival spirit is not confined to a part only, but pervades the whole army. * * * Brother Hughes was with us the other night, but left again the next morning. The old man seemed to have much more influence in the army than young men. I have preached twice since writing to you, and the Spirit seemed to be with me. The second was upon the crusifixion of Christ: text in the 53d chapter of Isaiah: 'He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities.' It was the first time in my life, that is, in public speaking, that my feelings got so much the mastery of me as to make me weep like a child. In the conclusion I asked all who felt an interest in the prayers of God's people to come to the anxious seat. Many presented themselves, and I could hear many among them, with sobs and groans, imploring God to have mercy on them, and I think the Lord did have mercy upon them, for when we opened the door of the church six united with us. Every Sabbath you may see the multitude wending their way to the creek to see the solemn ordinance typical of the death, burial, and resurrection of our Savior. Strange to say that a large number of those joining the pedo-Baptist branches prefer being immersed; though in the preaching you cannot tell to which denomination a man belongs. This is as it should be; Christ and him crucified

should be the theme. It is time enough, I think, after one is converted, to choose his church rule of faith.

"If this state of things should continue for any considerable length of time, we will have in the Army of Tennessee an army of believers. Does the history of the world record any where the like? Even Cromwell's time sinks into insignificance. A revival so vast in its proportions, and under all the difficulties attending camp life, the bad weather this spring, and innumerable difficulties, is certainly an earnest of better, brighter times not far in the future."

To the believer in Jesus, we feel sure that these extracts concerning this remarkable work of grace, will prove of deep interest; so we make no apologies for quoting, in continuation, the following from another of those letters of our soldier brother, to whom the conquests of the cross were the sweetest of all themes:

"Near Dalton, April 28th. 1864.—My Dear Sister: I should have written sooner but have been very much engaged, and when not engaged have felt more like resting than writing, and, to add to this, sister Mary very agreeably surprised me by coming up on last Saturday. She left on Tuesday morning for home. While she was at Dalton, I went down on each day and remained until evening. I fear ma and sister are too much concerned about me, and therefore render themselves unhappy. Would that they could trust God calmly for the issue. And I fear, too, that

they deny themselves of many comforts, that they may furnish me with what I could do (as many have to do) without.

* * * * * *

"The great unexampled revival is fast increasing in interest. I have just returned from the creek, where I saw thirty-three buried with Christ in baptism, acknowledging there, before two thousand persons, that they were not ashamed to follow Jesus in His ordinance. My soul was made happy in witnessing the solemn scene. In that vast audience everything was as quiet and respectful as in a village chapel; and, by the way, I have seen village congregrations who might come here and learn to behave. General Lowry baptized about thirteen of them who were from his brigade. He is a Christian, a soldier and a zealous preacher, and his influence is great. It was truly a beautiful sight to see a general baptizing his men. He preaches for our brigade next Sabbath. I preached for General Polk's brigade night before last, and we had a very interesting meeting. They have just begun there, yet I had a congregation of some 400. At the conclusion of the services, I invited those who desired an interest in our prayers to manifest their desire by coming to the altar. A goodly number presented themselves, and we prayed with them. I shall preach for them again very soon. The revival in our brigade has continued now for four weeks, nearly, and many have found peace with their Savior. If we could remain stationary a few

weeks longer, I believe the greater portion of the army would be converted. This is all the doings of the Lord, and is surely the earnest of the great deliverance in store for us. This is the belief of many, that this is 'the beginning of the end.' From all parts of the army the glad tidings comes that a great revival is in progress. I wish I had time to write to you at length. One instance of the power of His spirit: A lieutenant of our regiment, and heretofore very wild, became interested, and for nearly three weeks seemed groaning in agony. The other day he came around to see me, and, with a face beaming with love, told me he had found Christ, and that his only regret now was that he had not been a Christian all his life. It is growing dark. I must close. More anon. Affectionately,

YOUR BROTHER."

We take up the next letter in the order of time. It is numbered 25. The envelope is of brown wrapping paper, but neatly made, and has a blue Confederate 10 ct. postage stamp. It is addressed to my sister, who was then teaching at Corinth, Heard county, Georgia. It is dated:

"Near Dalton, May 5th, 1864." After speaking of having to take charge, early the next morning of the brigade picket guard, Thomie goes on to say:

"The sun's most down, but I think I can fill these little pages before dark. Captain F., coming in at this time, tells me a dispatch has just been

received to the effect that the Yankees are advancing in the direction of Tunnell Hill, but they have made so many feints in that direction lately that we have become used to them, so don't be uneasy.

"The great revival is going on with widening and deepening interest. Last Sabbath I saw eighty-three immersed at the creek below our brigade. Four were sprinkled at the stand before going down to the creek, and two down there, making an aggregate within this vicinity of eighty-nine, while the same proportion, I suppose, are turning to God in other parts of the army, making the grand aggregate of many hundreds. Yesterday I saw sixty-five more baptized, forty more who were to have been there, failing to come because of an order to be ready to move at any moment. They belonged to a more distant brigade. * * If we do not move before Monday, Sabbath will be a day long to be remembered—'the water will,' indeed, 'be troubled.' Should we remain three weeks longer, the glad tidings may go forth that the Army of Tennessee is the army of the Lord. But He knoweth best what is for our good, and if He see proper can so order His providence as to keep us here. His will be done."

The next letter is addressed to me, but was sent to my sister at his request, and is dated "Altoona Mountains, Near Night, May 22d." He writes:

"Oh, it grieved my very soul when coming through the beautiful Oöthcaloga valley, to think of the sad fate which awaited it when the foul invader should

occupy that 'vale of beauty.' We formed line of battle at the creek, at the old Eads' place; our brigade was to the left as you go up to Mr. Law's old place on the hill, where we stayed once when pa was sick. Right there, with a thousand dear recollections of by-gone days crowding my mind, in the valley of my boyhood, I felt as if I could hurl a host back. We fought them and whipped them, until, being flanked, we were compelled to fall back. We fought them again at Cass Station, driving them in our front, but, as before, and for the same reason, we were compelled to retreat.

* * * * * *

"As I am requested to hold prayer-meeting this evening at sunset, I must close."

Thomie's next letter, in this collection, is addressed to his sister Missouri, who had returned home, and is headed, simply, "Army of Tennessee, May 31st." It is written in a round, legible, but somewhat delicate hand, and gives no evidence of nervousness or hurry. To those fond of war history it will be of special interest:

"Our brigade, in fact our division, is in a more quiet place now than since the commencement of this campaign. We were ordered from the battlefield on Sunday morning to go and take position in supporting distance of the left wing of the army, where we arrived about the middle of the forenoon, and remained there until yeterday evening, when our division was ordered back in rear of the left centre, where

we are now. Contrary to all expectations, we have remained here perfectly quiet, there being no heavy demonstration by the enemy upon either wing. We were very tired and this rest has been a great help to us; for being a reserve and flanking division, we have had to trot from one wing of the army to the other, and support other troops.

* * * * * *

"Well, perhaps you would like to hear something from me of the battle of New Hope Church, on Friday evening, 27th inst. We had been, since the day before, supporting some other troops about the centre of the right wing, when, I suppose about 2 o'clock, we were hurried off to the extreme right to meet a heavy force of the enemy trying to turn our right. A few minutes later, and the whole army might now have been in the vicinity of Atlanta; but, as it was, we arrived in the nick of time, for before we were properly formed the enemy were firing into us rapidly. We fronted to them, however, and then commenced one of the hottest engagements, so far, of this campaign. We had no support, and just one single line against a whole corps of the enemy, and a lieutenant of the 19th Arkansas, wounded and captured by them and subsequently retaken by our brigade, stated that another corps of the enemy came up about sundown. The fighting of our men, to those who admire warfare, was magnificent. You could see a pleasant smile playing upon the countenances of

many of the men, as they would cry out to the Yankees, 'Come on, we are demoralized!'

"One little incident right here, so characteristic of the man, Major Kennard, of whom I have told you often (lately promoted), was, as usual, encouraging the men by his battle cry of 'put your trust in God, men, for He is with us,' but concluded to talk to the Yankees awhile, sang out to them, 'Come on, we are demoralized,' when the Major was pretty severely wounded in the head, though not seriously, when raising himself up, he said:

"'Boys, I told them a lie, and I believe that is the reason I got shot.'

"The fighting was very close and desperate and lasted until after dark. About 11 o'clock at night, three regiments of our brigade charged the enemy, our regiment among them. We went over ravines, rocks, and almost precipices, running the enemy entirely off the field. We captured many prisoners, and all of their dead and many of their wounded fell into our hands. This charge was a desperate and reckless thing, and if the enemy had made any resistance they could have cut us all to pieces. I hurt my leg slightly in falling down a cliff of rocks, and when we started back to our original line of battle, I thought I would go back alone and pick my way; so I bore off to the left, got lost, and completely bewildered between two armies. I copy from my journal:

"'Here I was, alone in the darkness of midnight,

with the wounded, the dying, the dead. What an hour of horror! I hope never again to experience such. I am not superstitious, but the great excitement of seven hours of fierce conflict, ending with a bold, and I might say reckless, charge—for we knew not what was in our front—and then left entirely alone, causes a mental and physical depression that for one to fully appreciate he must be surrounded by the same circumstances. My feelings in battle were nothing to compare with this hour. After going first one way and then another, and not bettering my case, I heard some one slipping along in the bushes. I commanded him to halt, and enquired what regiment he belonged to, and was answered "15th Wisconsin," so I took Mr. Wisconsin in, and ordered him to march before me—a nice pickle for me then, had a prisoner and did not know where to go. Moved on, however, and finally heard some more men walking, hailed them, for I had become desperate, and was answered "Mississipians." Oh, how glad I was! The moon at this time was just rising, and, casting her pale silvery rays through the dense woods, made every tree and shrub look like a spectre. I saw a tall, muscular Federal lying dead, and the moonlight shining in his face. His eyes were open and seemed to be riveted on me. I could not help but shudder. I soon found my regiment, and 'Richard was himself again.'"

"I went out again, to see if I could do anything for their wounded. Soon found one with his leg

shot through, whom I told we would take care of. Another, shot in the head, was crying out continually: "Oh my God! oh my God!!" I asked him if we could do anything for him, but he replied that it would be of no use. I told him God would have mercy upon him, but his mind seemed to be wandering. I could not have him taken care of that night and, poor fellow, there he lay all night.

"The next morning I had the privilege of walking over the whole ground, and such a scene! Here lay the wounded, the dying, and the dead, hundreds upon hundreds, in every conceivable position; some with contorted features, showing the agony of death, others as if quietly sleeping. I noticed some soft beardless faces which ill comported with the savage warfare in which they had been engaged. Hundreds of letters from mothers, sisters, and friends were found upon them, and ambrotypes taken singly and in groups. Though they had been my enemies, my heart bled at the sickening scene. The wounded nearly all expressed themselves tired of the war.

"For the numbers engaged upon our side, it is said to be the greatest slaughter of the enemy of any recent battle. Captain Hearne, the old adjutant of our regiment, was killed. Eight of our regiment were instantly killed, two mortally wounded, since dead.

"I did not think of writing so much when I began, but it is the first opportunity of writing anything like a letter that I have had. Lieutenant McMurray is

now in charge of the Texas hospital at Auburn, Alabama.

* * * * * *

"Well, you are now Aunt Missouri. Oh, that I could see my boy! Heaven has protected me thus far, and I hope that God will consider me through this dreadful ordeal, and protect me for Christ's sake; not that there is any merit that I can offer, but I do hope to live that I may be an humble instrument in the hands of my God to lead others to him. I hold prayer in our company nearly every night when circumstances will permit, and the men don't go to sleep before we are quiet. Poor fellows, they are ever willing to join me, but often are so wearied I dislike to interrupt them.

"My sister, let our trust be confidently in God. He can save, or can destroy. Let us pray Him for peace. He can give it us; not pray as if we were making an experiment, but pray believing God will answer our prayers, for we have much to pray for."

My sister subsequently copied into her journal the following extract taken from his, and written soon after the Battle of New Hope Church:

"May 31st, 1864.—Here we rest by a little murmuring brook, singing along as if the whole world was at peace. I lay down last night and gazed away up in the peaceful heavens. All was quiet and serene up there, and the stars seemed to vie with each other in brightness and were fulfilling their allotted destiny. My comrades all asleep; nothing breaks the silence.

I leave earth for a time, and soar upon 'imagination's wing' far away from this war-accursed land to where bright angels sing their everlasting songs of peace, and strike their harps along the golden streets of the New Jerusalem, and the swelling music bursts with sweet accord throughout vast Heaven's eternal space!"

* * * * * *

Again on Sabbath, June 5th, he writes: "No music of church bells is heard to-day summoning God's people to worship where the gospel is wont to be heard. We are near a large log church called Gilgal. What a different scene is presented to-day from a Sabbath four years ago, when the aged minister of God read to a large and attentive congregation: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, He leadeth me beside the still waters." O, God, wilt thou not interpose Thy strong arm to stop the bloody strife? Wilt Thou not hear the prayers of Thy people who daily say, Lord, give us peace? The Lord will answer, and soon white-robed peace will smile upon our unhappy country. O God, hasten the day, for we are sorely vexed, and Thine shall be all the glory."

Ere peace was to dawn upon his beloved country, his own soul was to find it through the portals of death; but ere that time, save a brief interval of enforced rest, weary marchings and heart-breaking scenes and sorrows were to intervene.

Thomie's next letter is dated, "In the Field, near Lost Mountain, June 14th," and the next, "In the Ditches, June 22nd, 1864." The next, "Near Chattahoochee river, July 6th, 1864," tells of the retreat of the army from Kennasaw Mountain to Smyrna church, and of his having come off safely from another "small fight" the day before, in which several of his comrades were killed.

Owing to nervous prostration, and other illness, Thomie was soon after sent to the hospital at Macon, transferred from there to Augusta, and from the latter point given a leave of absence to visit his sister who had found refuge with her cousin, Mrs. T. J. Hillsman, a daughter of Rev. Wm. H. Stokes, of blessed memory. Here with his father's kindred, cheered by beautiful hospitality and cousinly affection, our darling brother enjoyed the last sweet rest and quiet earth was e'er to give him before he slept beneath its sod.

CHAPTER IV.

A visit to Dalton—The fidelity of an old-time slave.

"From Atlanta to Dalton, $7.75. From the 23rd to the 26th of April, 1864, to Mrs. John Reynolds for board, $20.00. From Dalton to Decatur, $8.00."

The above statement of the expense attending a round trip to Dalton, Georgia, is an excerpt from a book which contains a record of every item of my expenditures for the year 1864.

This trip was taken for the purpose of carrying provisions and articles of clothing to my brother and his comrades in General Joseph E. Johnston's command. In vain had our mother tried to send appetizing baskets of food to her son, whose soldier rations consisted of salty bacon and hard tack; some disaster, real or imaginary, always occurred to prevent them from reaching their destination, and it was, therefore, determined at home that I should carry the next consignment.

After several days' preparation, jugs were filled with good sorghum syrup, and baskets with bread, pies and cakes and other edibles at our command, and sacks of potatoes and onions and peppers were included. My fond and loving mother and I, and our faithful aid-de-camps of African descent, conveyed them to

the depot. In those days the depot was a favorite resort with the ladies and children of Decatur. There they always heard something from the front—wherever that might be. The obliging agent had a way, all his own, of acquiring information from the army in all its varied commands, and dealt it out galore to the encouragement or discouragement of his auditors, as his prejudices or partialities prompted. On this occasion many had gone there who, like myself, were going to take the train for Atlanta, and in the interim were eager to hear everything of a hopeful character, even though reason urged that it was hoping against hope.

I was the cynosure of all eyes, as I was going to "*the front;*" and every mother who had a darling son in that branch of the army hoped that he would be the first to greet me on my arrival there, and give me a message for her. And I am sure, if the love consigned to me for transmission could have assumed tangible form and weight, it would have been more than fourteen tons to the square inch.

Helpful, willing hands deposited with care my well labeled jugs, baskets, etc., and I deposited myself with equal care in an already well filled coach on the Georgia Railroad. Arrived in Atlanta, I surreptitiously stowed the jugs in the car with me, and then asked the baggage-master to transfer the provisions to a Dalton freight train. Without seeming to do so, I watched his every movement until I saw the last article safely placed in the car, and then I went aboard

myself. Surrounded by jugs and packages, I again became an object of interest, and soon found myself on familiar terms with all on board; for were we not friends and kindred bound to each other by the closest ties? Every age and condition of Southern life was represented in that long train of living, anxious freight. Young mothers, with wee bit tots chaperoned by their mothers, and sometimes by their grandmothers, were going to see their husbands, perhaps the last time on earth; and mothers, feeling that another fond embrace of their sons would palliate the sting of final separation. The poor man and the rich man, fathers alike of men fighting the same battles in defense of the grandest principles that ever inspired mortal man to combat, on their way to see those men and leave their benedictions with them; and sisters, solitary and alone, going to see their beloved brothers, and assure them once more of the purest and most disinterested love that ever found lodgment in the human heart. Many and pleasant were the briet conversations between those dissimilar in manners, habits and conditions in life; the great bond connecting them rendered every other consideration subordinate, and the rich and poor, the educated and ignorant met and mingled in harmonious intercourse.

Those were days of slow travel in the South. The roads were literally blockaded with chartered cars, which contained the household goods of refugees who had fled from the wrath and vandalism of the enemy, and not unfrequently refugees themselves

inhabited cars that seemed in fearful proximity to danger. Ample opportunity of observation on either side was furnished by this slow travel, and never did the fine arable lands bordering the Western & Atlantic road, from the Chattahoochee river to Dalton, give greater promise of cereals, and trees in large variety were literally abloom with embryo fruit. Alas! that such a land should be destined to fall into the hands of despoilers.

At Dalton I went immediately to the agent at the depot, whom I found to be my old friend, John Reynolds, for the purpose of getting information regarding boarding houses. He told me his wife was in that line and would accommodate me, and, to render the application more easy, he gave me a note of introduction to her.

A beautiful, well furnished room was given me, and a luscious supper possessed exhilarating properties.

In the meantime Mr. Reynolds had, at my request, notified my brother, whom he knew, of my presence in his house, and I awaited his coming anxiously; but I was disappointed. A soldier's time is not his own, even in seasons of tranquility, and he was on duty and could not come then, but he assured me on a small scrap of paper, torn from his note-book, that he would come as soon as he could get off "to-morrow morning."

The waiting seemed very long, and yet it had its ending. The night was succeeded by a typical April

day, replete with sunshine and shower, and the hopes and fears of a people struggling for right over wrong.

At length the cheery voice of him, who always had a pleasant word for every one, greeted me, and I hastened to meet him. That we might be quiet and undisturbed, I conducted him to my room, and a long and pleasant conversation ensued. I wish I had time and space to recapitulate the conversation, for its every word and intonation are preserved in the archives of memory, and will enter the grand eternities with me as free from discord as when first uttered. Our mother's failing health gave him concern, but his firm reliance on Him who doeth all things well, quieted his sad forebodings and led the way to pleasanter themes.

He loved to dwell upon the quaint and innocent peculiarities of his younger sister, and as for his older one, it was very evident that he regarded her fully strong enough to "tote her own skillet," and "paddle her own canoe."

A rap upon the door indicated that some one wished to see either one or the other of us. I responded, and was met by a negro boy bearing a huge waiter, evidently well filled, and covered over with a snow-white cloth. The aroma from that waiter would have made a mummy smile. I had it put upon a table, and then I removed the cover, and saw with gratification the squab pie that I had ordered for dear Thomie, and a greater gratification awaited me, i. e., seeing him eat it with a relish. Nor was the pie the

only luxury in that waiter. Fresh butter and buttermilk, and a pone of good corn-bread, etc., etc., supplemented by baked apples and cream and sugar.

"Come, dear Thomie, and let us eat together once more," was my invitation to that dinner, and radiant with thanks he took the seat I offered him. I did not have the Christian courage to ask him to ask a blessing upon this excellent food, but I saw that one was asked in silence, nevertheless, and I am sure that an invocation went up from my own heart none the less sincere.

"Sister, I appreciate this compliment," he said.

"I could do nothing that would compliment you, Thomie," I answered, and added, "I hope you will enjoy your dinner as a love offering from me."

We lingered long around that little table, and many topics were touched upon during that period.

After dinner I asked Thomie to lie down and rest awhile. He thanked me, and said that the bed would tempt an anchorite to peaceful slumber, and he could not resist its wooings. A few minutes after he lay down he was sound asleep. He slept as a child—calm and peaceful. That a fly might not disturb him, I improvised a brush—my handkerchief and a tender twig from a tree near by being the component parts. As I sat by him and studied his manly young face, and read in its expression of goodwill to all mankind, I wept to think that God had possibly required him as our sacrifice upon the altar of our country.

The slanting rays of the Western sun fell full and

radiant upon his placid face, and awakened him from this long and quiet slumber. With a smile he arose and said:

"This won't do for me."

Hasty good-byes and a fervent "God bless you" were uttered, and another one of the few partings that remained to be taken took place between the soldier and his sister.

THE day was bright and exhilarating, in the month of June, 1864. Gay laughing Flora had tripped over woodland and lawn and scattered with prodigal hand flowers of every hue and fragrance, and the balmy atmosphere of early summer was redolent with their sweet perfume; and all nature, animate and inanimate, seemed imbued with the spirit of adoration towards the Giver of these perfect works. Although many hearts had been saddened by the mighty conflict being waged for the supremacy of Constitutional right, there were yet in Decatur, a large number to whom personal sorrow for personal bereavement had not come, and they were in sympathy with this beautiful scene, whose brilliant tints were but the reflection of divine glory, and whose faintest odor was distilled in the alchemy of heaven.

I was contemplating this scene in grateful admiration, and blended with my thoughts came the memory of my brother, who was in the foremost ranks of the contest. He, too, loved the beautiful and the good,

and "looked from nature up to nature's God." All unconsciously I found myself plucking his favorite flowers, and arranging a choice bouquet, a spirit offering to him who might even then be hovering over me and preparing my mind for the sad denouement. With these reflections, I ascended the steps of my cottage home, and turned to take another look upon the enchanting scene, when I saw, approaching, one of my mother's faithful servants, who was hired to Dr. Taylor, a well known druggist of Atlanta. Ever apprehensive of evil tidings from "the front," and "the front" the portion of the army that embraced my brother, I was almost paralyzed. I stood as if riveted to the floor, and awaited developments. King, for that was the name of the ebony-hued and faithful servant whose unexpected appearance had caused such a heart flutter, came nearer and nearer. On his approach I asked in husky voice, "Have you heard anything from your Marse Thomie, King?"

"No, ma'am; have you?"

The light of heaven seemed to dispel the dark clouds which had gathered over and around my horizon, and I remembered my duty to one, who, though in a menial position, had doubtless come on some kind errand.

"Come in, King, and sit down and rest yourself," I said, pointing to an easy chair on the portico.

"I am not tired, Miss Mary, and would rather stand," he replied.

And he did stand, with his hat in his hand; and I

thought for the first time in my life, probably, that he evinced a true manhood, worthy of Caucasian lineage; not that there was a drop of Caucasian blood in his veins, for he was a perfect specimen of the African race, and as black as Erebus.

The suspense was becoming painful, when it was broken by King asking:

"Miss Mary, is Miss Polly at home?"

"Yes, King, and I will tell her you are here."

"Miss Polly," my mother and King's mistress, soon appeared and gave him a genuine welcome.

King now lost no time in making known the object of his visit, and thus announced it:—

"Miss Polly, don't you want to sell me?"

"No; why do you ask?"

"Because, Miss Polly, Mr. Johnson wants to buy me, and he got me to come to see you and ask you if you would sell me."

"Do you want me te sell you, King? Would you rather belong to Mr. Johnson than to me?"

"Now, Miss Polly, you come to the point, and I am going to try to answer it. I love you, and you have always been a good mistuss to us all, and I don't think there is one of us that would rather belong to some one else, but I tell you how it is, Miss Polly, and you musn't get mad with me for saying it; when this war is over none of us are going to belong to you. We'll all be free, and I would a great deal rather Mr. Johnson would lose me than you. He is always bragging about what he will do; hear him

talk, you would think he was a bigger man than Mr. Lincoln is, and had more to back him; but I think he's a mighty little man myself, and I want him to lose me. He say he'll give you his little old store on Peachtree street for me. It don't seem much, I know, but much or little, Miss Polly, it's going to be more than me after the war."

And thus this unlettered man, who in the ordinary acceptation of the term, had never known what it was to be free, argued with his mistress the importance of the exchange of property of which he himself was a part, for her benefit and that of her children.

"Remember, Miss Polly," he said, "that when Marse Thomie comes out of the war, it will be mighty nice for him to have a store of his own to commence business in, and if I was in your place I would take it for me, for I tell you again, Miss Polly, when the war's over we'll all be free."

But the good mistress, who had listened in silence to these arguments, was unmoved. She saw before her a man who had been born a slave in her family, and who had grown to man's estate under the fostering care of slavery, whose high sense of honor and gratitude constrained him to give advice intelligently, which if followed, would rescue her and her children from impending adversity, but she determined not to take it. She preferred rather to trust their future well-being into the hands of Providence. Her beautiful faith found expression in this consoling passage of Scripture: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not

want." And this blessed assurance must have determined her to pursue the course she did, else it would have been reckless and improvident. She told King that when our people became convinced that the troubles between the South and North had to be settled by the sword, that she, in common with all good citizens, staked her all upon the issues of the war, and that she would not now, like a coward, flee from them, or seek to avert them by selling a man, or men and women, who had endeared themselves to her by service and fidelity.

CHAPTER V.

A PERILOUS TRUST.

It is most time to go to the post-office, ain't it, Miss Mary? We are going to get a letter from Marse Thomie this morning."

"What makes you so certain of it, Toby?"

"I don't know 'm, but I am; and every time I feels this way, I gets one; so I'll just take my two little black calves and trot off to the office and get it;" and suiting the action to the word he struck a pretty brisk gait, and was soon around the corner and out of sight.

Then Decatur received but two mails per day—one from an easterly direction and the other from a westerly direction. The northern, northwestern, southern and southwestern, all coming in on the morning's Georgia Railroad train. Therefore ever since Thomie's return to his command, the western mail was the one around which our hopes and fears daily clustered.

General Joseph E. Johnston's army was, at the time of this incident, at Dalton, obstructing the advance of Sherman's "three hundred thousand men" on destruction bent. And though there had been no regular line of battle formed for some time by the Confederate and Federal forces, there were frequent skirmishes,

disastrous alike to both sides. Hence the daily alternation of hopes and fears in the hearts of those whose principal occupation was waiting and watching for "news from the front."

The team of which Toby was the proud possessor, did its work quickly, and in less time than it takes to tell it he appeared in sight, returning from the post-office—one hand clasping a package of papers and letters, and the other, raised high above his head, holding a letter. I could not wait, and ran to meet him.

"I've got a whole lot of letters, and every one of them is from Dalton, and this one is from Marse Thomie!"

Toby had read the Dalton post-mark, and had made a correct statement. The well-known chirography of my brother had become so familiar to him that he never mistook it for another, and was unerring in his declarations regarding it. On this occasion Tommy's letter read thus:

"My Dear Sister—Those acquainted with army tactics know that Gen. Johnston is on the eve of an important move, or change of base; and that it should be the effort of the men, officers and privates, to be prepared to make the change, whatever it may be, with as little loss of army paraphernalia as possible. As the Confederate army has no repository secure from the approach of the enemy, several of our friends suggest that you might be willing to take care of anything which we might send to you, that would be

of future use to us—heavy over-coats, extra blankets, etc., etc. Consider well the proposition before you consent. Should they be found in your possession, by the enemy, then our home might be demolished, and you perhaps imprisoned, or killed upon the spot. Are you willing to take the risk, trusting to your ingenuity and bravery to meet the consequences? Let me know as soon as possible, as war times admit of little delay. General Granberry, Col. Bob Young, and others, may make known to you their wishes by personal correspondence. Love to my mother and sister, and to yourself, brave heart.

Affectionately, your brother,

T. J. STOKES."

This letter was read aloud to my mother, and the faithful mail carrier was not excluded. She listened and weighed every word of its contents. For several moments a silence reigned, which was broken by her asking me what I was going to do in the matter.

"What would you have me do?" I asked in reply.

"What would they do, Mary, in very cold weather, if they should lose their winter clothing, over-coats and blankets, now that supplies are so difficult to obtain?"

This question, evasive as it was, convinced me that my mother's patriotism was fully adequate to the occasion, and, fraught with peril as it might be, she was willing to bear her part of the consequences of taking care of the soldiers' clothes.

The return mail bore the following letter addressed

jointly to Gen. Granberry, Col. Robert Young, Captains Lauderdale and Formwalt, Lieutenant Stokes, and Major John Y. Rankin:

"My Dear Brother and Friends—I thank you for the estimate you have placed upon my character and patriotism, as indicated by your request that I should take care of your over-coats, blankets, etc., until you need them. If I were willing to enjoy the fruits of your valor and sacrifices without also being willing to share your perils, I would be unworthy indeed. Yes, if I knew that for taking care of those things, I would subject myself to real danger I would essay the duty. Send them on. I will meet them in Atlanta, and see that they continue their journey to Decatur without delay.

Your friend,

M. A. H. G."

Another mail brought intelligence of the shipment of the goods, and I lost no time in going to Atlanta and having them re-shipped to Decatur. There were nine large dry goods boxes, and I went immediately on their arrival, to Mr. E. Mason's and engaged his two-horse wagon and driver to carry them from the depot to our home. When they were brought, we had them placed in our company dining room. This room, by a sort of tacit understanding, had become a store room for the army before this important lot of goods came, and, as a dining room, much incongruity of furniture existed, among which was a large high wardrobe. The blinds were now closed and secured,

the sash put down and fastened, the doors shut and locked, and this room given up to the occupancy of Confederate articles; and thus it remained during the eventful period intervening between the departure of Gen. Joseph E. Johnston's army from Dalton, and Sherman's infamous order to the people of Atlanta and vicinity to leave their homes, that they might be destroyed by his vandal hordes.

CHAPTER VI.

A SCENE IN AN ATLANTA CONFEDERATE HOSPITAL.

"WELL, my boy, our patients are all getting along nicely in the Fair ground hospital," was the comforting assurance I gave to Toby, who was my faithful co-worker in all that pertained to the comfort of our soldiers. "Suppose we go to the Empire hospital and see what we can do there."

"Yes'm, I have always wanted to go there."

Taking one of the baskets we had brought with us from Decatur, and which contained biscuits, rusks, broiled and fried chicken, ground coffee, and blackberry wine, I handed it to him and we wended our way to the hospital. Things were not in as good shape there as at the Fair ground hospital. I perceived this at a glance, and upon asking and receiving permission from the Superintendent, I soon tidied up things considerably. Toby brought pails of fresh water, and aided in bathing the faces, hands, and arms of the convalescing soldiers, while I hunted up the soldier lads who ought to have been at home with their mothers, and bestowed the tender loving service that woman only can give to the sick and suffering.

Entering one of the wards I perceived a youth, or

one I took to be a youth, from his slender fragile figure, and his beardless face, lean and swarthy in sickness, but beautiful in its fine texture, and the marble-like whiteness of the brow. That he was of French extraction there could be no doubt. Quietly kneeling by the side of his cot, I contemplated his face, his head, his figure—I listened to his breathing, and watched the pulsations of his heart, and knew that his days, yea, his hours, were numbered. Taking his hand in mine, I perceived that the little vitality that remained was fast burning up with fever. Putting back the beautiful rings of raven hair that lay in dishevelled clusters over his classic head, and partly concealed his white brow, I thought of his mother, and imprinted upon his forehead a kiss for her sake. The deep slumber induced by anodynes was broken by that touch, and a dazed awakening ensued. "Mother," was his pathetic and only utterance.

"What can I do for you, my dear child?"

There are looks and tones which are never forgotten, and never shall I forget the utter despair in the eyes, lustrous and beautiful enough to look upon the glory of Heaven, and the anguish of the voice musical enough to sing the songs of everlasting bliss, as he said in tremulous tone, and broken sentences:

"I want to see a Catholic priest. I have paid several men to go for me. They have gone off and never returned. I have no more money with which to pay any one else."

"In silence I listened and wept. At length I said:

"My dear young friend, can you not make confession to "our Father which art in Heaven," and ask Him for Christ's sake to absolve you from all the sins of which you may think yourself guilty? He will do it without the intervention of a priest, if you will only believe on Him and trust Him. Can you not do this?"

The pencil of Raphael would fail to depict the anguish of his face; all hope left it, and, as he turned his despairing look upon the wall, tear drops glistened in his eyes and filled the sunken hollows beneath them. Again I took his passive hand in mine, and with the other hand upon his white forehead I told him he should see a priest—that I myself would go for one, and just as soon as he could be found I would return with him. Before leaving, however, I went to the ward where I had left Toby and the basket, and filling a little glass with wine I brought it to the sinking youth. He could not be induced to taste it. In vain I plead with him, and told him that it would strengthen him for the interview with the priest. "I am going now, and will come back, too, as soon as I can," I said to the dying youth, for to all intents and purposes he was dying then. Seing the other patients watching my every movement with pathetic interest, I was reminded to give the rejected wine to the weakest looking one of them.

Leaving Toby to either wait on, or to amuse the soldiers of the ward first entered, (where I found him playing the latter role much to their delight),

with hasty steps I went to the Catholic parsonage on Hunter street. In response to my ring the door was opened by an Irish woman from whom I learned that the priest was not in, and would not be until he came to luncheon at 12 o'clock m. It was then 11 o'clock, and I asked the privilege of waiting in the sitting room until he came. This being granted, I entered the room consecrated to celibacy, and perhaps to holy thoughts, judging from the pictures upon the walls, and the other ornaments. These things furnished food for reflection, and the waiting would not have seemed so long but for the thought of the poor suffering one who had given his young life for our cause. Intuitively I knew the sound of clerical footsteps as they entered the hall, and hastening to meet him I asked, "Is this Father O'Riley?" Receiving an affirmative answer, I told him of the youth at the Empire hospital who refused to be comforted other than by a Catholic priest. and of my promise to bring one to him. Father O'Riley said he had been out since early morning, visiting the sick, and would be obliged to refresh himself, both by food and repose, but that I could say to the young man that he would be there by 3 o'clock. "O, sir, you don't realize the importance of haste. Please let me remain in your sitting room until you have eaten your luncheon, and then I know you will go with me. I too have been out ever since early morning, engaged in the same Christ-like labors as yourself, and I do not require either food or repose."

My earnestness prevailed, and in a short while we were at our destination. At my request, Father O'Riley waited in the passage way leading to the ward until I went in to prepare the dying youth for his coming. I found him in that restless condition, neither awake nor asleep, which often precedes the deep sleep that knows no waking. Wetting my handkerchief with cold water, I bathed his face and hands, and spoke gently to him, and, when he seemed sufficiently aroused to understand me, I told him in cheerful tones that he could not guess who had come to see him. Catching his look of inquiry, I told him it was Father O'Riley, and that I would bring him in. Opening the door, I motioned to Father O'Riley to follow me. The dying youth and the Catholic priest needed no introduction by me. There was a mystic tie between them that I recognized as sacred, and I left them alone. Telling Father O'Riley that I consigned my charge to him, and that I would come back to-morrow, I bade them good-bye and left.

The contents of the basket had been gratefully received and devoured by those who deserved the best in the land, because they were the land's defenders.

To-morrow Toby and I, and the basket, were at the Empire hospital in due time, but the poor suffering youth was not there. The emancipated spirit had taken its flight to Heaven, and all that was mortal of that brave young soldier had been consigned by the ceremonies of the church he loved so well, to the protecting care of Mother earth.

CHAPTER VII.

Concealing Confederate clothing—Valuables carried to Atlanta—Toby taken ill.

On the way to the post-office early one morning in the sultry month of July, 1864, to mail a number of letters which I deemed too important to be intrusted to other hands, I was accosted as follows by Uncle Mack, the good negro blacksmith, whose shop was situated immediately upon the route:

"Did you know, Miss Mary, that the Yankees have crossed the river, and are now this side of the Chattahoochee?"

"Why no!" I said, and added with as much calmness as I could affect, "I do not know why I should be surprised—there is nothing to prevent them from coming into Decatur."

With an imprecation, more expressive than elegant, that evil should overtake them before getting here, he resumed hammering at the anvil, and I my walk to the post-office. Nor was Uncle Mack the only one who volunteered the information that, "The Yankees are coming—they are this side the river."

The time had come to devise means and methods of concealing the winter clothing and other accoutrements entrusted to my care by our dear soldiers. In

order to save them, what should I do with them ?—was a question which I found myself unable to answer. An attempt to retain and defend them would be futile indeed. And I have no right to jeopardize my mother's home by a rash effort to accomplish an impossibility. But what shall I do with these precious things, is the question. A happy thought struck me, and I pursued it only to find it delusive. The near approach of Sherman's army developed the astounding fact that Doctor A. Holmes, of Decatur, a Baptist minister of some prominence, claimed to be a Union man, in full sympathy with any means that would soonest quell the rebellion. This I had not heard, and in my dilemma I went to him to impart my plans and ask advice. He was morose and reticent, and I hesitated; but, driven by desperation, I finally said: "Dr. Holmes, as a minister of the Gospel, are you not safe? All civilized nations respect clerical robes, do they not?"

"I think so," he said, and continued by saying, "I have other claims upon the Federal army which will secure me from molestation."

A look of surprise and inquiry being my only answer, he said, "Amid the secession craze, I have never given up my allegiance to the United States."

"Why Dr. Holmes!" I said, in unfeigned surprise.

"I repeat most emphatically that I have remained unshaken in my allegiance to the United States. I have no respect for a little contemptible Southern

Confederacy whose flag will never be recognized on land or on sea."

"O, Doctor Holmes!" I gasped rather than said.

This was a sad revelation to me. On more than one occasion I had heard Dr. Holmes pray fervently for the success of the Southern cause, and to hear such changed utterances from him now, pained me exceedingly. Heartsore and discouraged I turned from him, and was leaving without the usual ceremony, when he said:

"What can I do for you?"

"I came, sir, to ask a great favor of you, but after hearing you express yourself as you have, I deem it useless to make known my wishes. Good morning."

This interview with Dr. Holmes was very brief; it did not consume as much time as it has done to tell it.

I did not walk in those days, but ran, and it required only a few moments to transfer the scene of action from Doctor Holmes' to my mother's residence. A hurried whispered conversation acquainted her with the situation; and at my request, and upon a plausible pretense, she took Toby to the depot where she remained until I sent for her. My confidence in Toby had not in the least diminished, but, being a boy, I feared that he might have his price, or be intimidated by threats into the betrayal of our secret; hence the management as above related to get him off the place while I consummated a plan, which, if successful, would be a great achievement, but, if a failure, would be fraught with disaster. In those days "the

depot was a place of popular resort—it was the emporium of news; and either from the agent, or from the Confederate scouts that were ever and anon dashing through Decatur, with cheerful messages and words of hope, the anxious mothers and sisters of the soldiers often wended their way there in hope of hearing something from their loved ones. Therefore no suspicion was aroused by this going to the depot.

Watching the exit of my mother until she had passed out of the gate, and Toby had closed it after her, I then went to the rear door and motioned to Telitha, who chanced to be in the right place, to come into the house. After seeing that every outside door was thoroughly secure, I took her into the dining room where the boxes were which contained the winter clothing, blankets, etc., already mentioned as having been sent for storage by our soldier friends at Dalton, and told her in pantomime that the Yankees were coming, and that if they saw these things they would kill us and burn the house. She fully understood and repeated the pantomime illustrative of possible—yea, probable—coming events, with pathetic effect. I showed her that I wanted a hammer and chisel with which to take off the lids of the boxes, and she brought them. The lids removed, each article was carefully lifted from its repository and placed on chairs. This important step being taken towards the concealment of the goods, I raised the sash and opened the shutters of the window nearest the cellar, which was unlocked and open, and Telitha climbing

out of the window received the boxes as I handed them to her, and carried them into the cellar. Old and soiled as the boxes were, they were not in a condition to create suspicion of recent use, so from that source we had nothing to fear. Telitha again in the house, shutters closed, and sash down, preparation was resumed for the enactment of a feat, dangerous and rash, the thought of which, even at this remote period, almost produces a tremor. The wardrobe mentioned in a former sketch as an incongruity in a dining room, was emptied of its contents, and inch by inch, placed in a position as near the center of the room as possible; then a large table was placed beside it, and a chair upon that; and then with the help of another chair, which served as a step, I got upon the table and then upon the chair that was on the table. As I went up, Telitha followed; standing on the table she grasped the wardrope with her strong hands and held it securely. I ascended from the chair to the top of it, stood up and steadied myself, and waited, immovable as a statue, until she got down and brought the chisel and hammer and placed them at my feet, and resumed her hold upon the wardrobe. I stooped and picked up the utensils with which I had to work, and straightened and steadied myself again. The chisel touched the plastered ceiling and the hammering began. Very slow work it was at first, as the licks had to be struck upward instead of downward, and the plastering was very thick. Finally the chisel went through and was withdrawn and removed to

another place, and by repeated efforts I secured an aperture large enough to insert my fingers, and a few well-directed licks round and about, so cracked and weakened the plastering that I was enabled to pull off some large pieces. A new difficulty presented itself. The laths were long, much longer than those of the present day, and I not only had to make a larger opening in the ceiling, but to take off the plastering without breaking the laths. More than once the wardrobe had to be moved, that I might pull off the plastering, and then with the greatest care prize off the laths. At length the feat was accomplished, and I laid the lids of the boxes, which had been reserved for this purpose, across the joists and made a floor upon which to lay the goods, more than once specified in these sketches. When the last article had been laid on this improvised shelf, I gazed upon them in silent anguish and wept. Telitha caught the melancholy inspiration, and also wept. Each lath was restored to its place and the perilous work was completed, and how I thanked the Lord for the steady nerve and level head that enabled me to do this service for those who were fighting the battles of my country.

But the debris must be removed. While the doors were yet closed and fastened, we pounded and broke the plastering into very small pieces and filled every vessel and basket in the house. I then went out and walked very leisurely over the yard and lot, and lingered over every lowly flower that sweetened the

atmosphere by its fragrance, and when I was fully persuaded that no spy was lurking nigh I re-entered the house and locked the door. Picking up the largest vessel, and motioning Telitha to follow suit, I led the way through a back door to a huge old ash-hopper, and emptied the pulverized plastering into it. In this way we soon had every trace of it removed from the floor. The dust that had settled upon everything was not so easily removed, but the frequent use of dusting brushes and flannel cloths, disposed of the most of it.

I now wrote a note to my mother, inviting her to come home, and to bring Toby with her. We kept the doors of the dining room closed, as had been our wont for some time, and if Toby ever discovered the change, he never betrayed his knowledge of it by word or look.

After a light breakfast, and the excitement of the day, I felt that we ought to have a good, luscious dinner, and, with the help at my command, went to work preparing it, and, as was my custom of late, I did not forget to provide for others who might come in. More than once during the day, Confederate scouts had galloped in and spoken a few words of encouragement; and, after taking a drink of water from the old oaken bucket, had galloped out again, and I hoped they would come back when the biscuit and tea-cakes were done, that I might fill their pockets.

After the last meal of the day had been eaten, I held another whispered consultation with my mother,

and in pursuance of the course agreed upon, I emptied several trunks, and with her help filled one with quilts and blankets, and other bedding; another with china and cut glass, well packed; and another with important papers, treasured relics, etc., and locked and strapped them ready for shipment next morning.

A night of unbroken rest and sleep prepared me for another day of surprises and toil, and before dawn I was up, dressed, waiting for daylight enough to justify me in the effort to see Mr. Ezekiel Mason, and beg him to hire me his team and driver to carry the trunks to the depot. After my ready compliance with his terms, he agreed to send them as soon as possible. The delay caused me to go on a freight train to Atlanta, but I congratulated myself upon that privilege, as the trunks and Toby went on the same train. There was unusual commotion and activity about the depot in Atlanta, and a superficial observer would have been impressed with the business-like appearance of the little city at that important locality. Men, women, and children, moved about as if they meant business. Trains came in rapidly, and received their complement of freight, either animate or inanimate, and screamed themselves hoarse and departed, giving place to others that went through with the same routine. Drays, and every manner of vehicles, blocked the streets, and endangered life, limb, and property, of all who could not vie with them in push, vim, and dare-deviltry. In vain did I appeal to scores of draymen, white and black, to carry my

trunks to the home of Mr. McArthur, on Pryor street—money was offered with liberality, but to no avail. Despairing of aid, I bade Toby follow me, and went to Mr. McArthur's. He and his good wife were willing to receive the trunks and give them storage room, but could extend no aid in bringing them there. At length, as a last resort, it was decided that Toby should take their wheelbarrow and bring one trunk at a time. I returned with him to the depot, and had the most valuable trunk placed upon the wheelbarrow, and with my occasional aid, Toby got it to its destination. A second trip was made in like manner, and the third was not a failure, although I saw that Toby was very tired. Thanking my good friends for the favor they were extending, I hurried back to the depot, myself and Toby, to take the first train to Decatur. Imagine our consternation on learning that the Yankees had dashed in and torn up the Georgia Railroad track from Atlanta to Decatur, and were pursuing their destructive work towards Augusta. Neither for love nor money could a seat in any kind of vehicle going in that direction be obtained, nor were I and my attendant the only ones thus cut off from home; and I soon discovered that a spirit of independence pervaded the crowd. Many were the proud possessors of elegant spans of "little white ponies" which they did not deem too good to propel them homeward. Seeking to infuse a little more life and animation into Toby, I said:

"Well, my boy, what do you think of bringing out

your little black ponies and running a race with my white ones to Decatur? Do you think you can beat in the race?"

"I don't know 'm," he said, without his usual smile, when I assayed a little fun with him, and I evidently heard him sigh. But knowing there was no alternative, I started in a brisk walk towards Decatur, and said to him, "Come on, or I'll get home before you do." He rallied and kept very close to me, and we made pretty good time. The gloaming was upon us, the period of all others auspicious to thought, and to thought I abandoned myself. The strife between the sections of a once glorious country was a prolific theme, and I dwelt upon it in all its ramifications, and failed to find cause for blame in my peculiar people; and my step became prouder, and my willingness to endure all things for their sakes and mine, was more confirmed. In the midst of these inspiring reflections, Toby, who had somewhat lagged behind, came running up to me and said:

"Oh! Miss Mary, just look at the soldiers! And they are ours, too!"

To my dying day I shall never forget the scene to which he called my attention. In the weird stillness it appeared as if the Lord had raised up of the stones a mighty host to fight our battles. Not a sound was heard, nor a word spoken, as those in the van passed opposite me, on and on, and on, in the direction of Decatur, in what seemed to me an interminable line of soldiery. Toby and I kept the track of the des-

troyed railroad, and were somewhere between Gen. Gartrell's residence and Mr. Pitt's, the midway station between Atlanta and Decatur, when the first of these soldiers passed us, and we were at Kirkwood when that spectre-like band had fully gone by. Once the moon revealed me so plainly that a cheer, somewhat repressed, but nevertheless hearty, resounded through the woods, and I asked:

"Whose command?"

"Wheeler's Cavalry," was the simultaneous response of many who heard my inquiry.

"Don't you know me? I am the one you gave the best breakfast I ever ate that morning we dashed into Decatur before sun up."

"And I'm the one, too."

"O, don't mention it," I said. "You are giving your lives for me, and the little I can do for you is nothing in comparison. May God be with you and shield you from harm until this cruel war is over."

I missed Toby, and looking back, saw him sitting down. I hurried to him, saying, "What is it, my boy?"

"O, Miss Mary, I am so sick. I can't go any further. You can go on home, and let me stay here—when I feel better I'll go too."

"No, my boy, I'll not leave you." And sitting by him I told him to rest his head upon my lap, and maybe after awhile he would feel better, and then we would go on. In the course of a half hour he vomited copiously, and soon after told me he felt

better, and would try to go on. More than once his steps were unsteady, and he looked dazed; but under my patient guidance and encouraging words he kept up, and we pursued our lonely walk until we reached Decatur.

As soon as we entered the town, we perceived that we had overtaken Wheeler's Cavalry. They were lying on the ground, asleep, all over the place; and in most instances their horses were lying by them, sleeping too. And I noticed that the soldiers, even though asleep, never released their hold upon the bridles. At home, I found my mother almost frantic. She knew nothing of the causes detaining me, and supposed that some disaster had befallen me individually. A good supper, including a strong cup of tea prepared by her hands, awaited us, and I attested my appreciation of it by eating heartily. Toby drank a cup of tea only, and said he "was very tired, and hurt all over."

CHAPTER VIII.

The advance guard of the Yankee army—I am ordered out —A noble federal.

THE day clear, bright and beautiful, in July, 1864, and though a midsummer's sun cast its vertical rays upon the richly carpeted earth, refreshing showers tempered the heat and preserved in freshness and beauty the vernal robes of May, and kept the atmosphere pure and delightful. Blossoms of every hue and fragrance decked the landscape, and Ceres and Pomona had been as lavish with their grains and fruits as Flora had been with flowers.

And I, assisted by Toby and Telitha, had gathered from the best of these rich offerings, and prepared a feast for Wheeler's Cavalry. By the way, strive against it as I would, I was more than once disturbed by the mental inquiry: "What has become of Wheeler's Cavalry? I saw it enter Decatur last night, and now there is not a soldier to be seen. It is true a large number of scouts came in this morning, and spoke comforting words to my mother, and reconnoitered around town fearlessly, but what has become of them?" Hope whispered: "Some strategic movement that will culminate in the capture of the entire Yankee army, no doubt is engaging its attention."

Yielding to these delusive reflections, and the seductive influence of earth, air and sky, I became quite exhilarated and hummed little snatches of the songs I used to sing in the happy days of childhood, before a hope had been disappointed or a shadow cast over my pathway.

These scenes and these songs were not in keeping with the impending disasters even then at our portals. Crapen draperies and funeral dirges would have been far more in keeping with the developments of the day.

Distant roar of cannon and sharp report of musketry spoke in language unmistakable the approach of the enemy, and the rapidity of that approach was becoming fearfully alarming. Decatur offered many advantages as headquarters to an invading devastating foe, "and three hundred thousand men" under the guidance of a merciless foe ought to have entered it long before they did—and would have done so if their bravery had been commensurate with their vandalism.

"Yank! Yank!" exclaimed our deaf negro girl, Telitha, as she stroked her face as if stroking beard, and ran to get a blue garment to indicate the color of their apparel, and this was our first intimation of their appearance in Decatur. If all the evil spirits had been loosed from Hades, and Satan himself had been turned loose upon us, a more terrific, revolting scene could not have been enacted.

Advance guards, composed of every species of criminals ever incarcerated in the prisons of the northern

states of America, swooped down upon us, and every species of deviltry followed in their footsteps. My poor mother, frightened and trembling, and myself, having locked the doors of the house, took our stand with the servants in the yard, and witnessed the grand *entre* of the menagerie. One of the beasts got down upon his all-fours and pawed up the dust and bellowed like an infuriated bull. And another asked me if I did not expect to see them with hoofs and horns. I told him, "No, I had expected to see some gentlemen among them, and was sorry I should be disappointed."

My entire exemption from fear on that occasion must have been our safeguard, as no personal violence was attempted. He who personated a bull must have been the king's fool, and was acting in collusion with the house pillagers sent in advance of the main army to do the dirty work, and to reduce the people to destitution and dependence. While he thought he was entertaining us with his quadrupedal didos, a hoard of thieves were rummaging the house, and everything of value they could get their hands upon they stole—locks and bolts having proved ineffectual barriers to this nefarious work. By this time the outside marauders had killed every chicken and other fowl upon the place, except one setting hen. A fine cow, and two calves, and twelve hogs shared a similar fate.

Several hours had passed since the coming of the first installment of the G. A. R., and a few scattering officers were perambulating the streets, and an occa-

sional cavalryman reconnoitering. Having surveyed the situation, and discovered that only women and children and a few faithful negroes occupied the town, the main army came in like an avalanche. Yea, if an avalanche and a simoon had blended their fury and expended it upon that defenseless locality, a greater change could scarcely have been wrought.

The morning's sun had shone upon a scene of luxuriant beauty, and heightened its midsummer loveliness, but the same sun, only a few hours later, witnessed a complete transformation, and blight and desolation reigned supreme. My mother and myself, afraid to go in the house, still maintained our outdoor position, and our two faithful servants clung very close to us, notwithstanding repeated efforts to induce them to leave. Our group had received an addition. Emmeline, a negro girl whom we had hired out in Decatur, had been discharged, and had now come home. She was not so faithful as her kith and kin, and was soon on familiar terms with the bummers. Toby complained of being very tired, and when we all came to think about it, we discovered that we, too, were tired, and, without being asked, took seats upon the capacious lap of mother earth. As we were not overly particular about the position we assumed, we must have presented quite an aboriginal appearance. But what mattered it—we were only rebels. Notwithstanding the insignia of the conqueror was displayed on every hand, we felt to a certain degree more protected by the pres-

ence of commissioned officers, and ventured to go into the house. I will not attempt a description of the change that had taken place since we had locked the doors, and, for better protection, had taken our stand in the yard.

Garrard's Cavalry selected our lot, consisting of several acres, for headquarters, and soon what appeared to us to be an immense army train of wagons commenced rolling into it. In less than two hours our barn was demolished and converted into tents, which were occupied by privates and non-commissioned officers; and to the balusters of our portico and other portions of the house, were tied a number of large ropes, which, the other ends being secured to trees and shubbery, answered as a railing to which at short intervals apart a number of smaller ropes were tied, and to these were attached horses and mules, which were eating corn and oats out of troughs improvised for the occasion out of bureau, washstand and wardrobe drawers.

Men in groups were playing cards, on tables of every size, and shape; and whiskey and profanity held high carnival. Thus surrounded we could but be apprehensive of danger; and to assure ourselves of as much safety as possible we barricaded the doors and windows, and arranged to sit up all night, that is, my mother and myself.

Toby complained of being very tired, and "hurting all over," as he expressed it. We assisted him in making the very best pallet that could be made of

the material at our command, and he lay down completely prostrated. Telitha was wide awake, and whenever she could secure a listener chattered like a magpie in unintelligible language accompanied by unmistakable gestures—gestures which an accomplished elocutionist might adopt with effect—and the burden of her heart was for Emmeline. Emmeline having repudiated our protection, had sought shelter, the Lord only knows where. Alas, poor girl!

As we sat on a lounge, every chair having been taken to the camps, we heard the sound of footsteps entering the piazza, and in a moment loud rapping, which meant business. Going to the window nearest the door, I removed the fastenings, raised the sash, and opened the blinds. Perceiving by the light of a brilliant moon that at least a half dozen men in uniforms were on the piazza, I asked:

"Who is there?"

"Gentlemen," was the laconic reply.

"If so, you will not persist in your effort to come into the house. There is only a widow and one of her daughters, and two faithful servants in it," I said.

"We have orders from headquarters to interview Miss Gay. Is she the daughter of whom you speak?"

"She is, and I am she."

"Well, Miss Gay, we demand seeing you, without intervening barriers. Our orders are imperative," said he who seemed to be the spokesman of the delegation.

"Then wait a moment," I amiably responded.

Going to my mother I repeated in substance the above colloquy, and asked her if she would go with me out of one of the back doors and around the house into the front yard. Although greatly agitated and trembling, she readily assented, and we noiselessly went out. In a few moments we announced our presence, and our visitors descended the steps and joined us. And those men, occupying a belligerent attitude towards ourselves and all that was dear to us, stood face to face and in silence contemplated each other. When the silence was broken the aforesaid officer introduced himself as Major Campbell, a member of General Schofield's staff. He also introduced the accompanying officers each by name and title. This ceremony over, Major Campbell said:

"Miss Gay, our mission is a painful one, and yet we will have to carry it out unless you satisfactorily explain acts reported to us."

"What is the nature of those acts?"

"We have been told that it is your proudest boast that you are a rebel, and that you are ever on duty to aid and abet in every possible way the would-be destroyers of the United States government. If this be so, we cannot permit you to remain within our lines. Until Atlanta surrenders, Decatur will be our headquarters, and every consideration of interest to our cause requires that no one inimical to it should remain within our boundaries established by conquest."

In reply to these charges, I said:

"Gentlemen, I have not been misrepresented, so far as the charges which you mention are concerned. If I were a man, I should be in the foremost ranks of those who are fighting for rights guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States. The Southern people have never broken that compact, nor infringed upon it in any way. They have never organized mobs to assassinate any portion of the people sharing the privileges granted by that compact. They have constructed no underground railroads to bring into our midst incendiaries and destroyers of the peace, and to carry off stolen property. They have never sought to array the subordinate element of the North in deadly hostility to the controlling element. No class of the women of the South have ever sought positions at the North which secured entrance into good households, and then betrayed the confidence reposed by corrupting the servants and alienating the relations between the master and the servant. No class of the women of the South have ever mounted the rostrum and proclaimed falsehoods against the women of the North—falsehoods which must have crimsoned with shame the very cheeks of Beelzebub.

"No class of the men of the South have ever tramped over the North with humbugs, extorting money either through sympathy or credulity, and engaged at the same time in the nefarious work of exciting the subordinate class to insurrection, arson, rapine and murder. If the South is in rebellion, a well-organized mob at the North has brought it about. Long years

of patient endurance accomplished nothing. The party founded on falsehood and hate strengthened and grew to enormous proportions. And, by the way, mark the cunning of that party. Finding that the Abolition Party made slow progress and had to work in the dark, it changed its name and took in new issues, and by a systematic course of lying in its institutions of learning, from the lowly school-house to Yale College, and from its pulpits and rostrums, it inculcated lessons of hate towards the Southern people whom it would hurl into the crater of Vesuvius if endowed with the power. What was left us to do but to try to relieve that portion of the country which had permitted this sentiment of hate to predominate, of all connection with us, and of all responsibility for the sins of which it proclaimed us guilty. This effort the South has made, and I have aided and abetted in every possible manner, and will continue to do so just as long as there is an armed man in Southern ranks. If this be sufficient cause to expel me from my home, I want your orders. I have no favors to ask."

Imagine my astonishment, admiration and gratitude, when that group of federal officers, with unanimity, said:

"I glory in your spunk, and am proud of you as my country woman; and so far from banishing you from your home, we will vote for your retention within our lines."

Thus the truth prevailed; but a new phase of the

conflict was inaugurated, as proved by subsequent developments.

Turning to my mother, Major Campbell said:

"Mother, how did our advance guards treat you?"

A quivering of the lips, and a tearful effort to speak, was all the response she could make. The aggravation of already extreme nervousness was doing its work.

"Would you like to see?" I said. He indicated rather than expressed an affirmative answer.

I went around and entered the house, and, opening the front door, invited him and his friends to come in. A hinderance to the exhibit I was anxious to make presented itself—we had neither candle nor lamp, and this I told to the officers. Calling to a man in the nearest camp, Major Campbell asked him to bring a light. This being done, I led the way into the front room, and there our distinguished guests were confronted by a huge pallet occupied by a sixteen year old negro boy. A thrill of amusement evidently passed through this group of western men, and electrical glances conveyed messages of distrust when I told them of my walk yesterday afternoon, accompanied by this boy, and his exhaustion before we got home, and his complaints of "hurting all over" before he lay down an hour ago.

A low consultation was held, and one of the officers left and soon returned with another who proved to be a physician. He aroused the boy, asked several questions, and examined his pulse and tongue.

"That will do," said he, and turning to the others he said:

"He is a very sick boy, and needs medical treatment at once. I will prescribe and go for the medicine, which I wish given according to directions."

Having received a statement of the boy's condition from a trusted source, we were evidently re-instated into the good opinion of Major Campbell and his friends. Telitha had retired from them to as great a distance as the boundaries of the room would permit, and every time she caught my eye she looked and acted what she could not express in words—utter aversion for the "Yank."

We now resumed our inspection of the interior of the house. The contents of every drawer were on the floor, every article of value having been abstracted. Crockery scattered all over the rooms, suggested to the eye that it had been used to pelt the ghosts of the witches burned in Massachusetts a century or two ago. Outrages and indignities too revolting to mention, met the eye at every turn. And the state of affairs in the parlor baffled description. Not an article had escaped the destroyer's touch but the piano, and circumstances which followed proved that that was regarded as a trophy and only waited removal.

"Vandals! Vandals!" Major Campbell sorrowfully exclaimed, and all his friends echoed the opinion, and said:

"If the parties who did this work could be identified we would hang them as high as Haiman."

But these parties were never identified. They were important adjuncts in the process of subjugation.

After wishing that the worst was over with us, these gentlemen, who had come in no friendly mood, bade us good night and took their leave. Thus the Lord of Hosts, in His infinite mercy, furnished a just tribunal to pass judgment upon my acts as a Southern woman, and that judgment, influenced by facts and surroundings, was just and the verdict humane.

CHAPTER IX.

The Battle of the 22d of July, 1864—The Death of Toby.

The excitement incident to the morning and evening of yesterday left my mother and myself in no frame of mind for repose, and we spent the night in suspense and painful apprehension of trouble yet to come greater and more direful than that through which we had passed. The medicine left for Toby by the physician summoned last night, was faithfully administered according to direction, and the morning found him better, though able to sit up only for a short while at a time. Measles had developed, and we felt hopeful that it would prove to be a very slight attack; and such it might have been, could we have controlled him properly, but the excitement and ever-varying scenes in the yard, and as far as vision extended, were so new and strange to him that, when unobserved, he spent much of his time at a window commanding the best view of the scene, and, thus exposed to a current of air, the disease ceased to appear on the surface and a troublesome cough ensued.

Having been without food since the preceding morning, our thoughts turned to the usual preparation for breakfast, but, alas, those preparations had

to be dispensed of, as we had nothing to prepare. This state of affairs furnished food for at least serious reflection, and the inquiry, "What are we to do?" found audible expression. The inexorable demands of hunger could not be stifled, and we knew that the sick boy needed hot tea and the nourishment which food alone could give, and yet we had nothing for ourselves or for him—so complete had been the robbery of the "advance guards" of the Grand Army of the Republic, that not a thing, animate or inanimate, remained with which to appease our hunger. "What are we to do?" was iterated and re-iterated, and no solution of the question presented itself. Even then appetizing odors from the campfires were diffusing themselves upon the air and entering our house, but aliens were preparing the food and we had no part in it. We debated this question, and firmly resolved not to expose ourselves to the jeers and insults of the enemy by any act of ours that would seem to ask for food; but that we would go to other Southern citizens in the war-stricken and almost deserted town, and, if they were not completely robbed, ask them to share their supplies with us until we could procure aid from outside of the lines so arbitrarily drawn.

In this dilemma an unexpected relief came to us, and convinced us that there was good even in Nazareth. And a large tray, evidently well-filled, and covered with a snow-white cloth, was brought in by an Irishman, who handed a card to my mother containing these words:

"To Mrs. Stokes and daughter, Miss Gay, with compliments of (Major) Campbell.

"Please accept this small testimonial of regard and respectful sympathy."

The latter part of the brief message was the sesame that secured acceptance of this offering, and my mother and myself jointly acknowledged it with sincere thanks, and again we thought of Elijah and the ravens. The contents of the tray—coffee, sugar and tea, sliced ham and a variety of canned relishes, butter, potatoes, and oat-meal and bread, were removed and the tray returned. That tray, on its humane mission, having found its way into our house more than once, opportunely re-appeared. We enjoyed the repast thus furnished, although briny tears were mingled with it.

The day passed without any immediate adventure. Great activity prevailed in army ranks. The coming and going of cavalry; the clatter of sabre and spur; the constant booming of cannon and report of musketry, all convinced us that the surrender of Atlanta by the Confederates was but a question of time. A few thousand men, however brave and gallant, could not cope successfully with "three hundred thousand" who ignored every usage of civilized warfare, and fought only for conquest.

I cannot say how long this state of affairs lasted before Wheeler's Cavalry, supported by Contederate Infantry, stole a march upon the Yankees and put them to flight. Garrard and his staff officers were in

our parlor—their parlor *pro tem.*—holding a council; the teamsters and army followers were lounging about promiscuously, cursing and swearing and playing cards, and seeming not to notice the approaching artillery until their attention was called to it, and then they contended that it was their men firing off blank cartridges. I intuitively felt that a conflict was on hand. Ma and I held whispered conversations and went from one window to another, and finally rushed into the yard. Men in the camps observed our excitement and said, "Don't be alarmed, it is only the men firing off their blank cartridges."

The irony of fate was never more signally illustrated than on this occasion. I would have laid down my life, yea, a thousand breathing, pulsing lives of my own, to have witnessed the overthrow of the Yankee army, and, yet, I may have been the means of saving a large portion of it on that occasion. Dreading, for my mother's sake and for the sake of the deaf girl and the sick boy, an attack upon the forces which covered our grounds, I ran to one of the parlor doors and knocked heavily and excitedly. An officer unlocked the door and opening it said:

"What is it?"

"Our men must be nearly here," I replied.

"Impossible," he said, and, yet, with a bound he was in the yard, followed in quick succession by each member of the conclave.

A signal, long, loud and shrill, awakened the drowsy, and scattered to the four-winds of heaven

cards, books and papers, and in a few minutes horses and mules were hitched to wagons, and the mules wagons and men were fairly flying from the approach of the Confederates. Women and children came pouring in from every direction and the house was soon filled. Before Garrard's wagon train was three hundred yards away, our yard was full of our men—our own dear "Johnnie Rebs." Oothcaloga Valley boys, whom I had known from babyhood, kissed, in passing, the hand that waved the handkerchief. An officer, ah, how grand he looked in gray uniform, came dashing up and said:

"Go in your cellar and lie down, the Federals are forming a line of battle, and we, too, will form one that will reach across these grounds, and your house will be between the two lines. Go at once."

My mother ran and got Toby's shoes and put them on for him, and told him to get up and come with her, and as he went out of the house, tottering, I threw a blanket over him, and he and Telitha went with ma to our near neighbor, Mrs. Williams, her cellar being considered safer than ours. I remained in our house for the two-fold purpose of taking care of it, if possible, and of protecting, to the best of my ability, the precious women and children who had fled to us for protection. Without thought of myself I got them all into the room that I thought would be safest, and urged them to lie down upon the floor and not to move during the battle. Shot and shell flew in every direction, and the shingles on the roof

were following suit, and the leaves, and the limbs, and the bark of the trees were descending in showers so heavy as almost to obscure the view of the contending forces. The roaring of cannon and the sound of musketry blended in harmony so full and so grand, and the scene was so absorbing that I thought not of personal danger, and more than once found myself outside of the portals ready to rush into the conflict—for was I not a soldier, enlisted for the war? Nor was I the only restless, intrepid person in the house on that occasion. An old lady in whose veins flowed the blood of the Washingtons was there, and it was with the greatest difficulty that I restrained her from going out in the arena of warfare. The traditions of her ancestors were so interwoven with her life, that, at an age bordering on four-score years and ten, they could not relax their hold upon her; and she and I might have gone in opposite directions had we fled to the ranks of the contending armies.

Mine was, no doubt, the only feminine eye that witnessed the complete rout of the Federals on that occasion. At first I could not realize what they were doing, and feared some strategic movement; but the "rebel yell" and the flying blue coats brought me to a full realization of the situation, and I, too, joined in the loud acclaim of victory. And the women and children, until now panic-stricken and silent as death, joined in the rejoicing. All the discouragements of the past few weeks fled from me, and hope revived, and I was happy, oh, so happy! I had seen a splen-

didly equipped army, Scofield's division, I think, ignominiously flee from a little band of lean, lank, hungry, poorly clad Confederate soldiers, and I doubted not an over-ruling Providence would lead us to final victory.

When the smoke of battle cleared away, my mother and her ebony charge returned home. Toby quickly sought his pallet, and burning fevers soon rendered him delirious the greater part of the time. In one of his lucid intervals, he asked me to read the Bible to him, and he told me what he wanted me to read about, and said:

"Miss Missouri used to read it to me, and I thought it was so pretty."

And I read to him the story of the cross—of Jesus' dying love, and he listened and believed. I said to him:

"My boy, do you think you are going to die?"

"Yes'm, I think I am."

I bowed my head close to him and wept, oh, how bitterly.

"Miss Mary, don't you think I'll go to heaven?" he axiously asked.

"Toby, my boy, there is one thing I want to tell you; can you listen to me?"

"Yes'm."

"I have not always been just to you. I have often accused you of doing things that I afterwards found you did not do, and then I was not good enough to acknowledge that I had done wrong. And

when you did wrong, I was not forgiving enough; and more than once I have punished you for little sins, when I, with all the lights before me, was committing greater ones every day, and going unpunished, save by a guilty conscience. And now, my boy, I ask you to forgive me. Can you do it?"

"Oh, yes'm!"

"Are you certain that you do? Are you sure that there is no unforgiving spirit in you towards your poor Miss Mary, who is so sorry for all she has ever done that was wrong towards you?"

"Oh, yes'm!"

"Then, my boy, ask the Lord to forgive you for your sins just as I have asked you to forgive me, and He will do it for the sake of Jesus, who died on the cross that sinners might be redeemed from their sins and live with Him in heaven."

I can never forget the ineffable love, and faith and gratitude depicted in that poor boy's face while I live, and as I held his soft black hand in mine, I thought of its willing service to "our boys" and wept to think I could do no more for him, and that his young life was going out before he knew the result of the cruel war that was waged by the abolitionists! He noticed my grief, and begged me not to feel so badly, and added that he was willing to die.

I arose from my position by his bed and asked him if there was anything in the world I could do for him. In reply he said:

"I would like to have a drink of water from the Floyd spring."

"You shall have it, my boy, just as soon as I can go there and back," and I took a pitcher and ran to the spring and filled and refilled it several times, that it might be perfectly cool, and went back with it as quickly as possible. He drank a goblet full of this delicious water and said it was "so good," and then added:

"You drink some, too, Miss Mary, and give Miss Polly some."

I did so, and he was pleased. He coughed less and complained less than he had done since the change for the worse, and I deluded myself into the hope that he might yet recover. In a short while he went to sleep, and his breathing became very hard and his temperature indicated a high degree of fever. I urged my mother to lie down, and assured her that if I thought she could do anything for Toby at any time during the night I would call her.

I sat there alone by that dying boy. Not a movement on his part betrayed pain. His breathing was hard and at intervals spasmodic. With tender hand I changed the position of his head, and for a little while he seemed to breathe easier. But it was only for a little while, and then it was evident that soon he would cease to breathe at all. I went to my mother and waked her gently and told her I thought the end was near with Toby, and hurried back to him. I thought him dead even then, but after an

interval he breathed again and again, and all was over. The life had gone back to the God who gave it, and I doubt not but that it will live with Him forever. The pathos of the scene can never be understood by those who have not witnessed one similar to it in all its details, and I will not attempt to describe it. No time-piece marked the hour, but it was about midnight, I ween, when death set the spirit of that youthful negro free. Not a kindred being nor a member of his own race was near to lay loving hand upon him, or to prepare his little body for burial. We stood and gazed upon him as he lay in death in that desolated house, and thought of his fidelity and loving interest in our cause and its defenders, and of his faithful service in our efforts to save something from vandal hands, and the fountain of tears was broken up and we wept with a peculiar grief over that lifeless form.

My mother was the first to become calm, and she came very near me and said, as if afraid to trust her voice:

"Wouldn't it be well to ask Eliza Williams and others to come and 'lay him out?'"

Before acting on this suggestion I went into another room and waked Telitha and took her into the chamber of death. A dim and glimmering light prevented her from taking in the full import of the scene at first; but I took her near the couch, and, pointing to him, I said:

"Dead! — Dead!!"

She repeated interrogatively, and when she fully realized that such was the case, her cries were pitiable, oh, so pitiable.

I sank down upon the floor and waited for the paroxysm of grief to subside, and then went to her and made her understand that I was going out and that she must stay with her mistress until I returned. An hour later, under the skillful manipulation of good "Eliza Williams"—known throughout Decatur as Mrs. Ami Williams' faithful servant—and one or two others whom she brought with her, Toby was robed in a nice white suit of clothes prepared for the occasion by the faithful hands of his "Miss Polly," whom he had loved well and who had cared for him in his orphanage.

We had had intimation that the Federals would again occupy Decatur, and as soon as day dawned I went to see Mr. Robert Jones, Sen., and got him to make a coffin for Toby, and I then asked "Uncle Mack" and "Henry"—now known as Decatur's Henry Oliver—to dig the grave. Indeed, these two men agreed to attend to the matter of his burial. After consultation with my mother, it was agreed that that should take place as soon as all things were in readiness. Mr. Jones made a pretty, well-shaped coffin out of good heart pine, and the two faithful negro men already mentioned prepared with care the grave. When all was in readiness, the dead boy was placed in the coffin and borne to the grave by very gentle hands.

Next to the pall-bearers my mother and myself and Telitha fell in line, and then followed the few negroes yet remaining in the town, and that funeral cortege was complete.

At the grave an unexpected and most welcome stranger appeared. "Uncle Mack" told me he was a minister, and would perform the funeral service—and grandly did he do it. The very soul of prayer seemed embodied in this negro preacher's invocation; nor did he forget Toby's "nurses," and every consolation and blessing was besought for them. And thus our Toby received a Christian burial.

CHAPTER X.

EVERETT'S DESERTION.

During the early spring of that memorable year 1864, it was announced to the citizens of Decatur, that Judge Hook and family, including his accomplished daughter, Mrs. Whitesides, and her children, from Chattanooga, had arrived at the depot, and were domiciled, *pro tem.*, in cars which had been switched off the main track of the famous old Georgia railroad. This novel mode of living, even in war times, by people in their monetary condition and social standing, naturally attracted much attention, and brought us to a full realization of approaching danger. That this family, accustomed to all the luxuries of an elegant home, should live in such an abode, with its attendant privations, was convincing proof that the home they had abandoned had become intolerable because of the proximity of the enemy; and it was also fearfully suggestive that that ubiquitous enemy was extending his dominion and bringing the fiery, bloody conflict into the very heart of "the rebellion."

A rebellion, by way of parenthesis, which impartial historians will put on record as the grandest uprising of a long suffering people that was ever known in

the annals of nations; "a mutiny" (as that chief of Southern haters, John Lathrop Motley, whose superb egotism impressed him with the idea that his influence could change the political trend of Great Britain towards the South, has seen proper to denominate it) in the camp of American councils brought about by unceasing abuse of the Southern States by political tricksters, whose only hope of survival lay in the hatred for the South thus engendered.

The coming of Judge Hook's family was hailed with pleasure by all good and loyal citizens, and was a ligament connecting more closely states suffering in a common cause; and we all called upon them and soon numbered them with our intimate friends. Mrs. Whitesides and Miss Hook were effective workers in all that benefitted our soldiers or their families.

Judge Hook was the superintendent of Government Iron Works, and literally brought the foundry as well as the operatives with him. Among the latter was a man by the name of Everett, who, with his family, consisting of his wife and five children, occupied an old one room house near a corner of our home lot. Although a hearty, hale, and rather good looking man, Everett was very poor, and the first time I ever saw his wife she came to borrow "a little flour." As my mother never turned away from a borrower, Mrs. Everett's vessel was filled to overflowing, and, besides, a pitcher of butter-milk and a plate of butter was given to her, for which she was extremely grateful.

An acquaintance thus begun continued during the spring and early summer months, and there was not a day during that period that my mother did not find it convenient to do something for this family. Mrs. Everett was more than ordinarily intelligent for a person in her position; and the blush which mantled her pretty cheeks when she asked for anything betrayed her sensibility; and her children were pretty and sweet-mannered. I never saw Everett, only as I met him going and coming from his work, and on those occasions he showed the greatest respect for me by taking off his hat as he approached me and holding it in his hand until he had fully passed. He seemed to be a steady worker, and if he ever lost a day, I never heard of it; and Mrs. Everett was industrious, but much of the time unemployed for lack of material with which to work, and she often begged for something to do. She was anxious to work for our soldiers, and told me that all of her male relatives were in the Confederate army. This circumstance endeared her very much to me; and I made the support of his family very much easier to Everett than it would have been had he lived in a non-appreciative neighborhood. And when the village girls met at our house to practice for concerts for the benefit of our soldiers, which they did almost weekly, I never forgot that Mrs. Everett's brothers were in our army fighting valiantly, no doubt, for our cause, and I always asked her to come and bring her children to

my room and listen with me to the sweet music and patriotic songs.

As time sped, many opportunities for witnessing Mrs. Everett's devotion to her native land presented themselves; and her service to its defenders, though humble and unobtrusive, was valuable. Her children, too, always spoke lovingly of our soldiers, and were never more happy than when doing something for them. At length the time came for another move of the foundry, and quietly as if by magic, it and its appurtenants, under the judicious management of Judge Hook, got on wheels and ran at the rate of thirty-five miles an hour until it reached Augusta—another haven of rest invested with heavenly beauty. After the departure of this important adjunct to this portion of the Confederacy, it was discovered that Everett and his family remained in Decatur. And a remarkable change came over them. Instead of the free-spoken unsophisticated woman that she had always appeared to be, Mrs. Everett became reserved and taciturn, and seldom left the enclosure by which her humble dwelling was surrounded. And the children ceased to cheer us by their merry prattle, and daily trip for a pitcher of butter-milk, which, under the changed and unexplained circumstances, my mother sent to them.

On the never-to-be-forgotten 19th day of July, 1864, when a portion of Sherman's army dashed into Decatur, it obtained a recruit. In an incredibly short time, Everett was arrayed in the uniform of a Yankee

private, and was hustling around with the Yankees as if "to the manner born."

On the 22nd of July, when the Confederates ran the Yankees out of the little village they had so pompously occupied for a few days, Everett disappeared, and so did his family from the little house on the corner. I supposed they had left Decatur, until I went out in town to see if I could hear anything from the victors—their losses, etc.—when by chance I discovered that they had taken shelter in the old post-office building on the northeast corner of the court house square.

The morning after the hurried evacuation of Decatur by the federal troops, I arose, as was my custom, as day was dawning, and, as soon as I thought I could distinguish objects, I opened the front door and stepped out on the portico. As I stood looking upon the ruin and devastation of my war-stricken home, imagine my surprise and consternation when I saw a white handkerchief held by an invisible hand above a scuppernong grape arbor. My first impulse was to seek security within closed doors, but the thought occurred to me that some one might be in distress and needed aid. I therefore determined to investigate the case. In pursuance of this object I went down the steps, and advanced several yards in the direction of the waving signal, and asked:

"Who is there?"

"Come a little nearer, please," was the distinct answer.

"I am near enough to hear you; what can I do for you?" I said, and did go a little nearer.

"Miss Mary, don't be afraid of me; I would die for you, and such as you, but I cannot die for a lost cause,"—and through an opening in the foliage of the vines, which were more on the ground than on the scaffolding, a head protruded—handsome brown eyes, and dark whiskers, included—Everett's head, in all the naturalness of innocence.

I thought of his wife and of his children, and of his wife's brothers in the Confederate army, and again asked with deliberation:

"What can I do for you?"

"Bless me or curse me," was the startling answer, and he continued:

"Your kindness to my wife and children has nerved me to come to you and ask that you will aid me in seeing them, especially her. Will you do it?"

"Yes, though I despise you for the step you have taken, I will grant your request. Don't be afraid that I will betray you."

"Where shall I go?" he asked, with a perceptible tremor in his voice.

"While I am out here seeming to prop up these shrubs, make your way to the kitchen and enter its front door, and don't close it after you, but let it remain wide open. But be still until I tell you to start."

As if going for something, I walked hastily around the house and kitchen, and entering the latter brought out an old hoe, and seemed to use it quite indus-

triously in banking up earth around fallen shrubbery. Watching an opportunity—for, in those war times, all things, animate and inanimate, seemed to have ears—I said:

"When I go in the house, you must go into the kitchen, and be certain to let the doors remain open."

I never knew how Everett made this journey, whether upright as a man, or upon all-fours like a beast.

From sheer exhaustion my poor mother was sleeping still, and Toby's breathing and general appearance as he lay upon his pallet, plainly indicated the presence of deep-seated disease. I looked around for Telitha, and, not seeing her, I went into the dining room where I found her sitting by a window. By unmistakable signs she made me understand that she had witnessed the entire proceeding connected with Everett, through the window blinds.

Soon the loud tramping of horses' feet caused me to run again to the front door, and I beheld a number of our scouts approaching. I went to meet them and shook hands with every one of them. No demonstration, however enthusiastic, could have been an exaggeration of my joy on again seeing our men, our dear Confederate soldiers, and yet I thought of Everett and trembled.

"Have you seen any Billy Yanks this morning?" was asked by several of them; and I replied:

"No, I have not seen any since our men ran them out of Decatur yesterday."

"How did they treat you while they were here?"

"You see the devastation of the place," I replied. "Personally we escaped violence; but I would like you to go into the house and see the condition of affairs there."

Said they:

"It would not be new to us. We have seen the most wanton destruction of property and household goods wherever they have gone."

"Do wait and let me have a pot of coffee made for you. The Yankees gave our negro girl quite a good deal of it, and not using it herself she gave it to my mother, and I want you to enjoy some of it," I said. They replied:

"Soldiers can't wait for luxuries."

"Good-bye, and God bless you," was their parting benediction. And then as if impelled by some strange inspiration, they galloped round to the well. I ran into the house and got several tumblers and fairly flew out there with them, as there was no gourd at the well. The kitchen was in close proximity, and the door stood invitingly open. What if a bare suspicion should prompt these brave men to enter? Alas! All would be up with the poor miscreant who had thrown himself upon my mercy, and who was even then lurking there under my direction. But, thank the good Lord, they did not enter, and, after again invoking God's blessing upon me, they galloped off in a southerly direction; and never did retreating sounds give more relief.

I went into the house. My mother, thoroughly exhausted, and perhaps discouraged, chose to remain in bed, and as she lay gazing intently upon the wall above her, I doubt if she saw it, so intense was her meditation. As Telitha by this time had a fire made in the dining room, I prepared a pot of good strong coffee, and after partaking of the exhilarating beverage myself, and seeing that each of the household was supplied, I took the remainder with necessary adjuncts to Everett. Never will I forget his appearance as we stood face to face—he a miserable deserter from the cause I loved, and the recipient of favors I scorned myself for bestowing. I told him I would go at once for his wife, and that after seeing her he must make his way into the enemy's lines as soon as possible.

A few minutes sufficed to carry me to Mrs. Everett's retreat, already mentioned. I sat down on the front door-steps and drew from my pocket a newspaper, which chanced to be there, and commenced reading aloud. At length I saw that my presence had attracted the notice of the children, and I called them. One by one they came to me, and I shook hands with them and asked them about their mother. Hearing my voice and inquiries, she spoke to me most pleasantly. I asked her to come out and take a seat by me on the steps. She did so, blushingly and timidly. I wrote on the margin of the paper, "Send the children away," and handed it to her. She did so. Assured that they were not in hearing

distance, I held the paper before me, and, as if reading, I told her the story of my early interview with her husband; of his earnest desire to see her; of my consent, on her account, to plan a meeting with her; of his secretion in our kitchen; and the necessity of the greatest caution in our movements. I told her that after walking around a little, and exchanging experiences with the brave ladies of the village, she would see me, by keeping watch, going home, and then she could take a little basket in her hand, as if going for something, and come on to our house. She implicitly followed my directions.

My mother received her as if nothing of an unpleasant nature had transpired; and, although it is a very difficult problem, and never solved without the aid of necromancy, I undertook to deduct something from nothing, and so far succeeded that I had several small packages to lay in her basket as she started. Knowing that she knew the way to the kitchen, I gave her a wish that all would end well, and bade her goodbye, never, doubtless, to meet her again on earth. The tears flowed plenteously down her cheeks, and her tongue refused to speak, but the pressure of her hand attested gratitude, and affection, and farewell. I got a glimpse of her as she went out of the alley gate; but I never knew when he abandoned his hiding place. I heard that about dusk a Federal army wagon, under protection of a company of troops, came and took her and her little children out of Decatur.

CHAPTER XI.

A surreptitious visit to Confederate lines—A narrow escape —My return—The fall of Atlanta.

No news from "the front;" no tidings from the loved ones in gray; no friendly spirit whispering words of cheer or consolation. Shut up within a narrow space, and guarded by Federal bayonets! not a ray of friendly light illuminated my environment.

The constant roaring of cannon and rattling of musketry; the thousand, yea, tens of thousands of shots blending into one grand continuous whole, and reverberating in avalanchan volume over the hills of Fulton, and the mountain heights of old DeKalb—told in thunder tones of the fierce contest between Federal and Confederate forces being waged without intermission for the possession of Atlanta.

The haughty, insolent boast of the enemy, now that Joe Johnston was removed from the command of the Army of the Tennessee, that they would make quick work of the rebellion, and of the complete subjugation of the South, had in no way a tendency to mitigate anxiety or to encourage hope. Thus surrounded, I sought and obtained permission to read Federal newspapers. The United States mail brought daily papers to the officers in command of the forces quar-

tered in our yard; and through this medium I kept posted, from a Northern stand-point, concerning the situation of both armies. While there was little in these dispatches gratifying to me, there was much that I thought would be valuable to my people if I could only convey it to them; and I racked my brain day and night, devising ways and means by which to accomplish this feat. But the ways and means decided upon, were, upon reflection, invariably adbandoned, as being impracticable.

In this dilemma, a most opportune circumstance offered an immediate solution of the difficult problem. In the midst of a deep study of the relative positions of the two armies, and of the hopes and fears animating both, a tall, lank, honest-faced yankee, came to the door of the portico and asked "if Miss Gay was in." I responded that I was she, and he handed me a letter addressed to myself. I hastily tore it open and read the contents. It was written by a reverend gentleman whose wife was a distant relative of my mother, and told that she was very ill. "Indeed," wrote he, "I have but little hope of ever seeing her any better, and I beg you to come to see her, and spend several days."

I showed the letter to my mother, who was sitting near by, and, like myself, engaged in studying the situation. She strenuously objected to my going, and advanced many good reasons for my not doing so; but my reasons for going counteracted them all, in my estimation, and I determined to go.

Taking Telitha with me, I carried the letter to the Provost Marshal, and asked him to read it and grant me the privilege of going. After reading the letter, he asked me how I obtained it, and received my statement. He then asked me if I could refer him to the party who brought it to me. Leaving the letter with him, I ran home and soon returned with the desired individual who had fortunately lingered in the yard in anticipation of usefulness. Convinced that the invitation was genuine, and for a humane purpose, this usually morose Marshal granted me "a permit" to visit those poor old sick people, for the husband was almost as feeble as his wife. I told the obliging Marshal that there was another favor I should like to ask of him, if he would not think me too presumptuous. "Name it," he said. I replied:

"Will you detail one or more of the soldiers to act as an escort for me? I am afraid to go with only this girl."

To this he also assented, and said it was a wise precaution. He asked when I wished to come home.

"Day after to-morrow afternoon," I told him, and received assurance that an escort would be in waiting for me at that time.

It now became necessary to make some important preparations for the trip. A great deal was involved, and if my plans were successful, important events might accrue. A nice white petticoat was called into requisition, and, when I got done with it, it was literally lined with Northern newspapers. "The

Cincinnati Enquirer," and "The New York Daily Times;" "The Cincinnati Commercial Gazette," and "The Philadelphia Evening Ledger," under the manipulation of my fingers, took their places on the inner sides and rear of the skirt, and served as a very stylish "bustle," an article much in vogue in those days. This preparatory work having been accomplished, it required but a few moments to complete my toilet, and, under the auspices of a clear conscience, and a mother's blessing, doubtless, I started on a perilous trip. The ever-faithful Telitha was by my side, and the military escort a few feet in advance.

After a walk of a mile and a half, I reached my destination for that day. I found the old lady in question much better than I had expected. Nervous and sick himself, her husband had greatly exaggerated her afflictions. By degrees, and under protest, I communicated to these aged people my intention of carrying information to Hood's headquarters, that might be of use to our army. I knew that these good old people would not betray me, even though they might not approve my course, and I confided to them my every plan. Both were troubled about the possible result if I should be detected; but my plans were laid, and nothing could deter me from pursuing them.

The rising sun of another day saw Telitha and me starting on our way to run the gauntlet, so to speak, of Federal bayonets. These good old people had given me much valuable information regarding the way

to Atlanta—information which enabled me to get there without conflict with either Confederate or Federal pickets. Knowing the topography of the country, I took a circuitous route to an old mill; Cobb's, I believe, and from there I sought the McDonough road. I didn't venture to keep that highway to the city, but I kept within sight of it, and under cover of breast-works and other obstructions, managed to evade videttes and pickets of both armies. After walking fourteen or fifteen miles, I entered Atlanta at the beautiful home of Mrs. L. P. Grant, near the southern boundary of the city. That estimable lady never lost an opportunity of doing good. The lessons of humanity and Christian grace impressed upon her youthful mind, and intensified by the life-long example of her devoted mother, Mrs. Ami Williams, of Decatur, had called into action all that is ennobling in woman. On this occasion, as upon every other offering an opportunity, she remembered to do good. She ordered an appetizing lunch, including a cup of sure enough coffee, which refreshed and strengthened me after my long walk. Her butler having become a familiar personage on the streets of Atlanta, she sent him as a guide to important places. We entered the city unchallenged, and moved about at will. The force of habit, probably, led me to Mrs. McArthur's and to Mrs. Craig's on Pryor street; and, by the way, these friends still own the same property, and occupy almost the same homes. The head of neither of these families was willing to accompany

me to Confederate headquarters, and without a guide I started to hunt them up myself. What had seemed an easy task, now seemed insurmountable. I knew not in what direction to go, and the few whom I asked, seemed as ignorant as myself. Starting from Mrs. Craig's, I went towards the depot. I had not proceeded very far, before I met Major John Y. Rankin. I could scarcely restrain tears of joy. He was a member of the very same command to which my brother belonged. From Major Rankin I learned that my brother, utterly prostrated, had been sent to a hospital, either in Augusta or Madison. He told me many other things of interest, which I cannot mention now, unless I was compiling a history instead of a series of personal reminiscences. Preferring not to stand upon the street, I asked Major Rankin to return with me to Mrs. Craig's, which he did, and spent an hour in pleasant conversation. Mrs. Craig was a delightful conversationalist, and while she was entertaining the Major with that fine art, I retired to a private apartment, and with the aid of a pair of scissors ripped off the papers from my underskirt, and smoothed and folded them nicely, and after re-arranging my toilet, took them into the parlor as a trophy of skill in outwitting the Yankees. Telitha, too, had a trophy to which she had clung ever since we left home, with the tenacity of an eel, and which doubtless she supposed to be an offering to "Marse Tom," and was evidently anxious that he should receive it. Having dismissed Mrs. Grant's butler,

as no longer necessary to my convenience, Major Rankin, myself, and Telitha, went direct to the headquarters of his command. The papers seemed to be most acceptable, but I noticed that the gleanings from conversation seemed far more so. The hopefulness and enthusiasm of our soldiers were inspiring. But alas! how little they knew of the situation, and how determined not to be enlightened. Even then they believed that they would hold Atlanta against Herculean odds, and scorned the idea of its surrender. At length the opening of Telitha's package devolved on me. Shirts, socks, and soap; towels, gloves, etc., formed a compact bundle that my mother had sent to our soldiers. Many cheery words were said, and good-byes uttered, and I left them to meet once more under very different circumstances.

I now turned my thoughts to our negroes, who were hired in different parts of the city. Rachel, the mother of King, hired herself and rented a room from Mr. John Silvey, who lived upon the same lot on Marietta street, upon which he has since erected his present elegant residence. In order that I might have an interview with Rachel without disturbing Mr. Silvey's family, I went to the side gate and called her. She answered and came immediately. I asked her if she realized the great danger to which she was continually exposed. Even then "shot and shell" were falling in every direction, and the roaring of cannon was an unceasing sound. She replied that she knew the danger, and thought I was doing wrong

to be in Atlanta when I had a home to be at. I insisted that she had the same home, and a good vacant house was ready to receive her. But she was impervious to every argument, and preferred to await the coming of Sherman in her present quarters. Seeing that I had no influence over her, I bade her good-bye and left. Telitha and I had not gone farther than the First Presbyterian church (not a square away) from the gate upon which I had leaned during this interview with Rachel, before a bomb-shell fell by that gate and burst into a thousand fragments, literally tearing the gate into pieces. Had I remained there one minute longer, my mortal being would have been torn to atoms. After this fearfully impressive adventure, unfortified by any "permit," I struck a bee line to Mrs. Grant's, having promised her that I would go back that way and stop awhile. An old negro man, belonging to Mrs. Williams, who had "come out" on a previous occasion, was there, and wanted to return under my protection to his home within the enemy's lines. Very earnest assurances from Mrs. Grant to that effect convinced me that I had nothing to fear from betrayal by him, and I consented that he should be a member of my company homeward bound. Two large packages were ready for the old man to take charge of, about which Mrs. Grant gave him directions, *sotto voce*. Putting one of them on the end of a walking cane he threw it over his right shoulder, and with his left hand picked up the other bundle. Telitha and I were

unincumbered. With a good deal of trepidation I took the advance position in the line of march, and walked briskly. We had not proceeded very far before we encountered our pickets. No argument was weighty enough to secure for me the privilege of passing the lines without an official permit. Baffled in this effort, I approved the action of the pickets, and we turned and retraced our steps in the direction of Atlanta, until entirely out of sight of them, and then we turned southward and then eastward, verging a little northward. Constant vigilance enabled me to evade the Yankee pickets, and constant walking brought me safely to the home of my aged and afflicted friends, from which I had started early in the morning of that day. Not being tired, I could have gone home; but the policy of carrying out the original programme is too apparent to need explanation. These friends were conservative in every act and word, and, it may be, leaned a little out of the perpendicular towards that "flaunting lie," the United States flag; therefore they were favorites among the so-called defenders of the Union, and were kept supplied with many palatable articles of food that were entirely out of the reach of rebels who were avowed and "dyed in the wool." A few minutes sufficed to furnish us with a fine pot of soup, (and good bread was not lacking), of which we ate heartily. The old negro man was too anxious to get home to be willing to spend the night so near, just for the privilege of walking into Decatur under

Yankee escort, and said he was "going home," and left me.

The next day my escort was promptly on hand, and in due time I was in Decatur, none the worse for having put into practice a favorite aphorism of the Yankees, that "all things are fair in war."

The old man had preceded me, and faithful to the behest of Mrs. Grant, had turned over a valuable package to my mother.

Not many mornings subsequent to the adventure just related, I discovered upon opening the door that the Yankee tents seemed to be vacant. Not a blue-coat was to be seen. What could it mean? Had they given up the contest and ignominiously fled? As if confirmatory of this gratifying suggestion, the booming of cannon in the direction of Atlanta was evidently decreasing. Then again I thought perhaps the wagon train had been sent out to forage upon the country, and as it would now have to go forty-five and fifty miles to get anything, it required an immense military escort to protect it from the dashing sanguinary attacks of the "Rebels." The latter thought was soon dismissed and the former embraced, and how consoling it was to me? Before the sun had attained its meridian height, a number of our scouts appeared on the abandoned grounds, and what joy their presence gave us! But they left as suddenly as they came, and on reflection we could not think of a single encouraging word uttered by them during their stay. Suspense became intolerable. With occasional

lulls the roaring of cannon was a continuous blending of ominous sound.

In the midst of this awful suspense, an apparition, glorious and bright, appeared in our presence. It was my brother. He had left Madison a few days before, where he had been allowed to spend a part of his furlough, instead of remaining at the Augusta hospital, and where he had received the tender ministrations of his estimable cousin, Mrs. Tom Hillsman, and her pretty young daughters, and the loving care of his sister Missouri, who was also at this time an inmate of her cousin's household. How I wished he could have remained there until restored to health. One less patriotic and conscientious would have done so. His mother's joy at meeting her beloved son, and under such circumstances, was pathetic indeed, and I shall never forget the effort she made to repress the tears and steady the voice, as she sought to nerve him for the arduous and perilous duties before him. Much of his conversation, though hurried, was regarding his Mary, in Texas, and the dear little boy dropped down from heaven, whom he had never seen.

The shades of night came on, and darker grew until complete blackness enveloped the face of the earth, and still the low subdued tones of conversation between mother, son, and daughter, mingled with unabated interest.

Hark! Hark! An explosion! An earthquake? The angry bellowing sound rises in deafening grandeur, and reverberates along the far-off valleys and

distant hill-tops. What is it? This mighty thunder that never ceases? The earth is ablaze—what can it be? This illumination that reveals minutest objects? With blanched face and tearful eye, the soldier said:

"Atlanta has surrendered to the enemy. The mighty reports are occasioned by the blowing up of the magazines and arsenals."

Dumbfounded we stood, trying to realize the crushing fact. Woman's heart could bear no more in silence, and a wail over departed hopes mingled with the angry sounds without.

Impelled by a stern resolve, and a spirit like to that of martyred saints, our brother said:

"This is no place for me. I must go."

And then he put an arm around each of us, and kissed us with a fervor of love that knew no bounds, and was quenching itself in unfathomable hopeless tenderness. The quiet fortitude and patriotism of his mother gave way in that dread hour, and she cried aloud in agonizing apprehension of never again clasping to her bosom her greatest earthly joy. No pen can describe the scene of that last parting between mother and son, and in sheer impotency I drop the curtain.

As he walked away from his sobbing mother, through the war-illuminated village, I never beheld mortal man so handsome, so heroically grand. His great tender heart, which I had seen heave and sway under less trying circumstances, seemed to have ossified, and not an emotion was apparent.

CHAPTER XII.

THE TEN DAYS' ARMISTICE.

Going out with the Confederate clothes—Scenes at Atlanta, and at Lovejoy's Station—The visit to Granbury's Brigade—The last interview with Thomie.

AFTER every morsel of food had been taken from the people, and every vestige of nutrition extracted from the earth, the following order, in substance, was proclaimed throughout the land held by the right of conquest:

"All who cannot support themselves without applying to the United States Commissary for assistance, must go outside of our lines, either North or South, within the period of time mentioned in this order, etc., etc."

And by this order, and by others even more oppressive and diabolical, the Nero of the nineteenth century, alias William Tecumseh Sherman, was put upon record as the born leader of the most ruthless, Godless band of men ever organized in the name of patriotism—a band which, but for a few noble spirits, who, by the power of mind over matter, exerted a restraining influence, would not have left a Southerner to tell the tale of its fiendishness on its route to the sea.

And now, like Bill Nye, after one of his sententious and doubtless truthful introductions to a Western sketch, I feel easier in my mind, and will proceed with my reminiscences of that unholy period of this country, and tell the truth about it, without favor or prejudice, if it kills me. After this pronunciamento had been issued, all was bustle and rapid movement in every household within the boundaries of usurpation. Under the strong arm of military power, delay was not permitted. Homes were to be abandoned, and household goods and household gods to be left for the enemy, or destroyed; and liberty under our own vine and fig tree was to be a thing of the past, and dependence upon strangers a thing of the future. In preparation for this enforced change, much that should have been done was left undone, but there was no time to correct mistakes—the armistice was only for ten days.

What were we to do, my mother and myself, was a question which presented itself with startling seriousness, and had to be answered without delay. Our farm in Gordon county had already been devastated by the invading army, and every improvement destroyed, and if we should lose our home in Decatur we would be poor indeed. But what were we to do? If we left our home, we knew it would share the fate of all other "abandoned" property, and furnish material for a bonfire for Nero to fiddle by; and if we remained, by grace of better men than he, what assurance had we that by any means within our grasp we

could obtain even a scanty subsistence, or be protected from personal abuse and insult by an alien army whose gentlemen were vastly in the minority.

We learned that our neighbors and friends, Mrs. Ami Williams and her estimable son, Mr. Frederick Williams, (an invalid from paralysis)—whose influence over General Schofield prevented my banishment from Decatur the very first night of its occupancy by the federal army—and the venerable Mr. and Mrs. Buchanan, (the latter a Bostonian and educated in Emmerson's celebrated school for young ladies), and other families as true to the South as the needle to the pole, were going to remain and take their chances within the enemy's lines, and we determined to do so too.

The officers in command of the post, especially the provost marshal, interrogated us very closely regarding our plans and expectations during the occupancy of the place by federal forces. Having satisfied them that our only remaining servant would do washing and ironing at reasonable prices, and that we would do darning and repairing, we were given a written permit to remain within the lines.

I, however, had a work to do, a feat to perform, which for audacity and courage, has seldom been surpassed, which would not admit of my staying at home until I had made a little trip to Dixie.

Knowing the value of his influence, I again went to Mr. Frederick Williams, and, confiding my plans to him, asked his assistance in getting permission to

go out and return during the armistice. I never knew what argument he employed for the accomplishment of this object. I only knew by inference. But I received a letter from General Schofield, Adjutant-General, of which the subjoined is an exact transcript:

DECATUR, GA., Sept. 1, 1864.

MISS GAY—It was hard for me to reconcile my conscience to giving the enclosed recommendation to one whose sentiments I cannot approve, but if I have committed an error it has been on the side of mercy, and I hope I'll be forgiven. Hereafter I hope you will not think of Yankees as all being bad, and beyond the pale of redemption.

To-morrow I leave for my own home in the "frozen north," and when I return it will be to fight for my country, and against your friends, so that I suppose I shall not have the pleasure of again meeting you. Very respectfully,

J. W. CAMPBELL.

And that Major Campbell's gallant act may be fully appreciated, I will add the letter which secured for me the great favor which I had the temerity to ask.

HEADQUARTERS, ARMY OF THE OHIO,
DECATUR, GA., Sept. 14, 1864.

MY DEAR COLONEL—I have the honor to introduce Miss Mary A. H. Gay, of this village, and I recommend her case to your favorable consideration. I do not know exactly what orders are now in force, but if you think you can grant her desires without

detriment to the public service, I am confident the indulgence will not be abused.

Very respectfully your obedient servant,

J. W. CAMPBELL.

To Col. J. C. Parkhurst, Pro. Mar. Gen., Army of the Cumberland.

Thus recommended by one high in army ranks, Col. Parkhurst granted me the privilege of going to see my young sister, then in Augusta, and carrying anything I might have saved from the ravages of the war, "unmolested." Fortified by these letters I went to the Provost Marshal, in Decatur, and told him I would be ready to go to Atlanta to-morrow morning at 8 o'clock, and I wanted to carry some old bed clothing and other things to my sister, and would be grateful for an ambulance, or an army wagon all to myself, and an Irish driver. He promised that both should be at my service at the time indicated,—not, however, without the sarcastic remark that, "if the Yankees had been as bad as I said they were, they would not have left anything for me to carry." I ran to my mother and imparted to her the glad tidings of success, and in a whispered conversation we soon had definite plans arranged for the consummation of the perilous duty before me. I went to the Federal camp and asked for some crocus sacks, such as are used in the transportation of grain, and quite a number were given to me. I shook them thoroughly, inside and out, and put them by. A ball of twine and some large nee-

dles had found their way into the house. The needles were threaded and placed in convenient proximity to the sacks. Telitha watched every movement with interest and intuitively divined its import. The wardrobe was empty, and my very first touch moved it at least one inch in the desired direction, and a helping hand from her soon placed it in favorable position. This much being accomplished, I took a seat by my mother on the front door steps and engaged in a pleasant conversation with a group of young Federal soldiers, who seemed much attached to us, and with whom I conversed with unreserved candor, and often expressed regret that they were in hostile array towards a people who had been goaded to desperation by infringement upon constitutional rights by those who had pronounced the only ligament that bound the two sections of the country together, "a league with hell, and a covenant with the devil." This I proved to them by documents published at the North, and by many other things of which they were ignorant.

While thus engaged, Captain Woodbury approached and said: "I learn that you are going out into Dixie, Miss Gay."

"Yes, for a few days," I replied.

"I am prepared to furnish a more pleasant conveyance to Atlanta than the one you have secured," said he, and continued, "I have a handsome new buggy and a fine trotter, and it will take only a few minutes to reach there. Will you accept a seat with me?"

If all the blood within me had overflowed its proper channels, and rushed to the surface, I could not have flushed more. I felt it in the commotion of my hair, and in the nervous twitching of my feet. The indignation and contempt that I felt for the man! That one who was aiding and abetting in the devastation of my country and the spoliation of my home, should ask me to take a seat with him in a buggy which he doubtless had taken, without leave or license from my countrymen, was presumptious indeed, and deserved a severe rebuke. But "prudence being the better part of valor," I repressed all that would have been offensive in word and act, and replied with suavity, "Thank you, Captain Woodbury, for the honor you would have conferred upon me, but I cannot accept it." Receiving no reply, I added:

"Let me in candor make a statement to you, and I think you will approve the motive that prompts my decision. I have not sought to conceal the fact that my only brother is in the Confederate army; he is there from motives purely patriotic, and not as a mercenary hireling. He is fighting for the rights guaranteed by the constitution of the United States, a constitution so sacred that our people have never violated it in any particular, and of which we have shown our highest appreciation by adopting it *verbatim*, as the guiding star of the Southern Confederacy. You are in an army claiming to be fighting for the Union, and yet, the government that sent you out on this glorious mission ignores

every principle of fraternal relation between the North and the South, and would subvert every fundamental principle of self-government and establish upon the wreck a centralized despotism. Could I, while you and I are so antagonistic, accept your offer and retain your good opinion? I think not, and I prefer to go in the conveyance already stipulated."

Silence, without the slightest manifestation of anger, assured me that my argument against taking a buggy drive with him to Atlanta, had not been lost on Captain Woodbury, of Ohio, a member of Garrard's Cavalry.

After this episode we bade our callers "good-evening," went into the house and busied ourselves with the important work before us, a work which probably would not attract attention because of the darkness that would surround the scene of its execution. The table and a chair had been placed, as once before, by the wardrobe already mentioned, and a little respite employed viewing the situation. The door connecting our room and this dining room was generally kept shut. At length night came on with its friendly, helpful darkness. The shutters of the windows had been closed for weeks, and secured by nails, and the house had been too often searched and plundered to be suspected of containing valuables. Therefore, we felt that if no unusual sound attracted notice we would accomplish our object unsuspected. But I was anxious and nervous in view of what was before me, and wanted the perilous work over with. So

when the darkness of night fully enshrouded the earth, with no other light than that which found its way from the campfires of the enemy through the latticed shutters, I stepped into the chair and thence upon the table, and Telitha followed and drew the chair up after her. Then with her strong dusky hands she seized the wardrobe as if it had been a toy in her hands. I steaded the chair by the wardrobe and stepped into it, and another step landed me on top of the wardrobe. My fingers penetrated the crevice between the slats which I wanted to pull off, and to a slight effort they yielded. Lest the noise occasioned by dropping them might attract notice, I stooped and laid each piece down as I drew it off the joist. When the aperture thus made was sufficient, I began to draw from their hiding place the precious Confederate overcoats and other winter apparel confided to my keeping (as already related), by soldiers of General Joseph E. Johnston's army, when they were at Dalton. One by one each piece was taken out and dropped down upon the floor. But by a lamentable oversight we afterwards found that one article had been left—a woolen scarf for the neck, knitted for my brother by his loving young wife in Texas.

Carefully I descended, and, with the aid of the girl, placed the chair, the table and the dear old wardrobe (which deserves to be immortalized in song and in story), in less suspicious positions, and then proceeded to fold and pack in the sacks, already men-

tioned, the precious articles. The thought occurred to me that my mother would like to have a hand in this labor of love, and I opened the door between us. I shall never forget her appearance as she stood as if riveted to the spot, near a window, watching the moving figures without. I approached her and in a cheerful whisper told her that I was now putting the things in the sacks, and I knew she would like to have an interest in the job. She tried to respond, but she was too nervous to do so. Slowly but surely she was yielding to the pressure upon nerve and upon brain.

As each sack was filled, a threaded needle securely closed the mouth. In a short while a number of these sacks stood in a group, as erect as if on parade, and I verily believe that if the host of profane, Godless braggarts (with but few exceptions), who surrounded the house, could have seen them at that time and known their contents, they would have evacuated Decatur in mortal fear of the ghosts of "Johnnie Rebs."

This important work having been accomplished without discovery, or even a shadow of suspicion, I felt vastly relieved, and thanked the Lord with all my heart for the health, strength, and ingenuity which had enabled me to consummate it. My mother and I lay down upon the same bed, and were soon blest by the invigorating influence of "tired nature's sweet restorer."

The song of the lark had ceased to be heard in this war stricken locality; chanticleer had long since fur-

nished a savory meal for camp followers, and the time pieces had either been spoiled or stolen; but there was a silent unerring chronometer within that never deviated, and needed no alarm attachment to arouse me from slumber, and the dawn found me up and preparing for the duties, and perhaps the dangers of the day.

Telitha had become quite an attraction to a bevy of men who occupied soldiers' quarters, and wore soldiers uniforms, and drew pay for doing so, from Uncle Sam's coffers; and as she had been trained to ideas of virtue and morality she often came in frowning and much ruffled in temper by their deportment towards her. Being almost entirely deaf and dumb, her limited vocabulary was inadequate to supply epithets expressive of the righteous indignation and contempt which she evidently felt,—she could only say, "Devil Yank, devil," and these words she used with telling effect both to the amusement and chagrin of the Yankees. This state of affairs convinced me, that for her protection she would have to be kept within doors, and I therefore assumed the task of drawing the water, and a few other jobs indispensable even in life's rudest state. On this occasion, when I went to the well for a bucket of water, before preparing our frugal breakfast, I was asked by early marauders why I did not let "that young colored lady draw the water." I candidly answered them, and told them I was going to ask the officers of the encampment to protect her while I was gone, and I also

would ask them to report any misdemeanor towards her, that they might witness, to headquarters.

After a good night's rest, my mother's nerves seemed all right again, and by 7 o'clock we had finished our breakfast, which consisted of bread and butter and coffee — the latter luxurious beverage being furnished by one whose heart was in touch with humanity. That the aperture in the ceiling of the dining room might not be discovered until I got the contraband goods out of the house, I had brought the sacks containing them into the adjoining room, and it was therefore the work of a very few minutes to convey them to the wagon, when that vehicle, drawn by a span of fine horses, under the guidance of the Irish driver, drove up to the front door. "Put those sacks into the wagon," I said, pointing to them. When the last one of them was stored away safely in that moving repository, one of those feelings of relief and security came over me that had more than once given me courage to brave successfully impending danger— and I donned my hat, and bade my mother and the faithful girl an almost cheerful "Good-bye," and took my seat by the driver, *en route* for Dixie. Would I get there? Ah! that was the question that had blanched my mother's cheek, and deprived her of the power of articulation when I said "Good-bye." But hope, "eternal in the human breast," whispered "yes," and thus encouraged, I spoke grateful words to the Irish driver, and asked him many questions about the

land of the shamrock and sunny blue skies. He was evidently flattered by my favorable knowledge of the Emerald Isle, and would have done anything within his power for me. God bless the Irish forever!

I asked him to drive under my direction to the residence of my estimable friends, Mr. and Mrs. Posey Maddox, the parents of the accomplished and erudite, Charles K. Maddox of Atlanta. To my great joy I saw wagons in their yard, already laden with their household goods, to be carried to the depot and turned over to Federal authorities, who assumed the transportation of them to Jonesboro and the safe delivery of them to the Confederate authorities, who in turn assumed the transportation and delivery of them to the nearest Confederate station. Mr. Maddox had secured the use of an entire freight car, and gladly consented to take me and my baggage in with theirs. Mrs. Maddox was particularly glad to have me go with them, and to her I confided the character of my baggage, and received in return many words of sympathy and approbation. Those who have studied mythical lore, and dwelt in imagination upon the attributes of mythical characters, especially those of an evil nature, can perhaps form some idea of the confusion and disquiet of an entire city yielding its possessions to an alien army, which now, that success had been achieved by brute force, was bent upon the utter impoverishment of the people, and their extreme humiliation. Curses and imprecations too vile to repeat, and boisterous laughter, and vulgar jests re-

sounded through the streets of Atlanta. Federal wagons followed in the tracks of Confederate wagons, and after a few light articles were placed in the latter for Southern destination, the former unblushingly moved up to receive pianos and other expensive furniture which found its way into every section of the North. And this highway robbery was permitted by William Tecumseh Sherman, the grand Mogul of the Army of the Republic. Truly had the city of Atlanta been turned into a veritable pandemonium.

At length our time came to move in the worse than death-like processions going Southward, and in a short while we were at Jonesboro, our destination, so far as Federal aid extended. As soon as I stepped from the car I wended my way to the Confederate officer of the day, whom I recognized by his regalia, and told him of my success in concealing and bringing out of Federal lines the winter clothing of our soldiers. He listened with polite attention and said it was a wonderfully interesting story, but altogether improbable.

"Go with me and I will prove to you the truthfulness of it," I eagerly said.

As it was a bleak equinoctial day, and drizzling rain, Mr. and Mrs. Maddox had not yet left their car, (by way of parenthesis, I would say that the favors shown to these excellent people was in consideration of Mr. Maddox being a very prudent minister of the gospel) and, when we reached it, I asked Mr. Maddox to roll one of my sacks to the door. He did so, and

I then asked the officer to examine its contents. A blade of a pen knife severed the twine with which the edges of the mouth had been sewed together, and the loved familiar gray and brass buttons, and other articles, verified the truth of my statement. He looked amazed, and exhausted his vocabulary of flattering encomiums upon me, and, what was more desirable and to the point, he asked what he could do in the matter, and assured me that there was nothing within the range of his jurisdiction that he would not do. I told him that the object of my coming to him was to ask that he send me and my precious charge to General Granbury's headquarters, as among other overcoats I had one of his in charge, as well as many other things belonging to his staff officers. He told me the finest span of Confederate horses and the best ambulance on the grounds should be at my service as soon as possible.

During the interim, I opened wide my eyes and took in the situation in all its horrible details. The entire Southern population of Atlanta, with but an occasional exception, and that of many miles in its vicinity, were dumped out upon the cold ground without shelter and without any of the comforts of home, and an autumnal mist or drizzle slowly but surely saturating every article of clothing upon them; and pulmonary diseases in all stages admonishing them of the danger of such exposure. Aged grandmother's tottering upon the verge of the grave, and tender maidens in the first bloom of young womanhood, and

little babes not three days old in the arms of sick mothers, driven from their homes, were all out upon the cold charity of the world.

Apropos, I will relate an incident that came under my observation during my brief stay at this station: When one of the long trains from Atlanta rolled in with its living pulsing freight and stopped at the terminus, a queenly girl, tall and lithe in figure and willowy in motion, emerged from one of the cars, and stood, the embodiment of feminine grace, for a moment upon the platform. In less time than it takes to chronicle the impression, her Grecian beauty, classic expression and nobility of manner, had daguerreotyped themselves upon the tablets of my memory, never to be effaced by mortal alchemy. The pretty plain debeige dress, trimmed with Confederate buttons and corresponding ribbon, all conspired to make her appear, even to a casual observer, just what she was—a typical Southern girl who gloried in that honor. She stood only a moment, and then, as if moved by some divine inspiration, she stepped from the car, and falling upon her knees, bent forward and kissed the ground. This silent demonstration of affection for the land of Dixie touched a vibrating chord, and a score or more of beautiful girlish voices blended in sweetest harmony while they told in song their love for Dixie. I listened spell-bound, and was not the only one thus enchanted. A United States officer listened and was touched to tears. Approaching me,

he asked if I would do him the favor to tell him the name of the young lady who kissed the ground.

"I do not think she would approve of my telling you her name, and I decline to do so," I said in reply. Not in the least daunted by this rebuff he responded:

"I shall learn it; and if she has not already become the wife or the affianced of another, I shall offer her the devotion of my life."

The Confederate officer of the day, God forever bless him! came for me. The army wagon was ready and standing by Mr. Posy Maddox's car, waiting to receive its precious freight, and a few minutes, sufficient to transfer it from car to wagon, and, after waiting to see the last sack securely placed in the wagon, I too, got in, and took my seat by the driver. A long cold drive was before us, but I was so robust I had no fear of the result.

The driver was a veritable young Jehu, and we got over the ground rapidly; but, owing to a mistake in following directions, it was a long time before we reached our destination, the course of which must have been due west from Jonesboro, and through a dense forest. And oh, the beauty of that forest! It will remain a living, vivid memory, as long as life endures. Its rich, varied and heavy foliage had been but slightly tinged by the frosts of autumn, and it was rendered more beautiful by the constant dripping of rain drops from every leaf and blossom. As the evening came on, dense, impenetrable clouds canopied the earth, and shut out every ray of sunlight, and

almost every ray of hope. At length night came on, dark and weird, and silent, and we were still in the woods without compass or star.

Just as my brave heart was about to succumb to despair, a vision of delight burst upon me—a beacon light, yea, hundreds of beacon lights, appeared before me, and filled my soul with joy. The camp fires of General Cleburne's brave men beckoned us onward, and gave us friendly greetings. Every revolution of the wagon wheels brought us perceptibly nearer the haven of rest. Sabbath-like quiet reigned throughout the encampment. No boisterous sounds nor profane imprecations broke the stillness. But there was a sound that reached my ear, filling my soul with joy unspeakable. A human voice it was. I had heard it before in the slight wail of infancy; in the merry prattle of childhood; in the melodious songs of youth; in the tender, well-modulated tones of manhood; and now; there was no mistaking it—in the solemn, earnest invocation to the Lord of Hosts, for the salvation of the world, for the millenial dawn, and that "peace on earth, and good will to men," which would never again be broken by the clarion of war, or earth's rude alarms. No sweeter voice ever entered the courts of Heaven.

My obliging young driver stopped the horses at a favorable distance, and I heard the greater part of that grand prayer, and wept for joy. When it was finished, we moved on, and were hailed by a sentinel who demanded the countersign, I believe it is called. The

driver satisfied him, and calling to a soldier, I asked him if he knew Lieutenant Stokes. "Like a book," he answered. "Please tell him his sister Mary is here," I said. In a moment I was clasped in his arms with the holy pressure of a brother's love. His first thought on seeing me was that some calamity must have occurred, and he said, "Sister, is Ma or Missouri dead?" "No, Thomie, but Toby is."

His brave head bowed low and he wept—sobbed audibly. I told him of Toby's loving mention of him, and of the boy's hope of Heaven. After this natural paroxysm of grief had subsided, he looked up, and with an ineffable smile, said:

"Sister, I know you have a secret to tell—what is it?"

"It is this; I have saved all those precious things that were sent to me from Dalton, and I have brought them to deliver to their rightful owners. Help me to do so as quickly as possible, that I may go back to Jonesboro to-night."

Had a bombshell exploded at his feet, the effect could not have been more electrical. He bounded to General Granbury's tent with the agility of a deer; he told the news to him and the others assembled there; and he came back, and they all came with him; and had I been a magician, I could not have been an object of greater interest. General Granbury protested against my return to Jonesboro through the darkness of night, and offered his tent for my occupancy, saying he would go in with some of the other

officers. Colonel Robert Young, a friend of years' standing, was also earnest in his efforts to keep me from carrying out my purpose to go back, and I gave it up. I knew that I was with friends, and permitted myself to be lifted out of the wagon and conducted to the General's tent. I took a seat upon a camp stool which was placed for me about the centre of the tent. The General and his staff officers sat around, and my dear brother was very near me. Thus arranged, a conversation was commenced which continued with slight interruptions into the "wee sma' hours" of the night. Colonel Young seemed to have something upon his mind which rendered him indifferent to society, or some duty to perform which required his attention outside the tent. At length, however, he came to the door, and asked my brother to come out a while. In a short time both of them came in together, and Col. Young, after asking us to excuse the interruption of the conversation, remarked that there was something outside that he would like us to see. My brother took me by the hand and led me out in front of the tent, and all the officers stood in a group around. Imagine my surprise when I perceived a long line of soldiers before us, and an officer on horseback galloping from one end of the line to the other. I ventured to ask my brother if they were going to have a moonlight drill without the moon? He smiled, and a faint pressure of the hand indicated that there was something on the tapis that would please me, but I must wait until it was revealed to others as well.

In much less time than it has taken to record this episode a signal was given, and one of the grandest cheers ever heard by mortal man resounded through the midnight darkness, and the dense forest, and was echoed over hill and dale. Another signal and another cheer, and yet another of each, and I broke down completely, and cried heartily. What had I done that my name should be thus honored by men enduring all the hardships of warfare, and fighting for my principles; and yet to me it was the most acceptable compliment ever paid to living woman. I often fancy I hear those voices now blending in one grand harmonious shout of praise to the great God of Heaven and earth, who has doubtless given rest to many of those weary ones.

Once more in General Granbury's tent, at the earnest solicitation of all present, I continued the rehearsal of all the Federal Army news that I had gleaned from close perusal of United States newspapers and from careless and unsuspicious talkers. General Granbury was evidently startled when I told him that I had heard Federal officers say "Hood was working to their hand precisely in going back to Tennessee, as Thomas was there with an army that was invincible, and which would whip him so bad, that there would not be a Johnnie Reb left to tell the tale;" and that they criticized severely the "generalship" of giving an invading army unobstructed route to the goal of their ambition, which, in this case, was South Carolina. I was asked by one of my auditors

to give my impressions of the situation, and I did so. As I described the magnitude of the Federal army, and its vindictive spirit as I had seen it, and its implacable feeling toward the South, I saw a shade of sadness pass over the noble faces of all present. "Have you lost hope of the ultimate success of our cause?" was a question I was compelled to answer, because anxiously asked. I, however, imitated a yankee custom by asking a question in reply, as to what our resources were, and if they were deemed adequate to cope with a foe which had the world to draw from, both for men and means? "But have you lost hope?" was the question I was called upon to answer without equivocation.

Silence and tears which would well up, were interpreted to mean what my tongue refused to speak. My brother perceiving this, put his hand on mine as it lay hopelessly upon my lap, and said, "Cheer up, sister mine; if you could have seen 'Old Pat's' men on drill this afternoon, you would think we are some ourselves."

Colonel Young continued to seem very much engaged outside, and, since the demonstration in my honor, had given us only an occasional glimpse of himself. At length he again came to the door and said, "Lieutenant, I should like to speak to you." My brother responded to the call, and soon returned and said: "As there is a hard day's march before us for to-morrow, we must let the General get a little

sleep, and this brave sister of mine must need it too. Come, let me conduct you to your room."

Good-byes were spoken that night which, in the providence of God, were destined never to be repeated, and Thomie and Colonel Young led the way to a bran new tent, never used before, and opened the door that I might enter. Thomie said, "My room is next to yours, sister. Pleasant dreams, and refreshing slumbers," and he kissed me good-night. "Good-night, dear brother." "Good-night, dear friend," said I, as he and Col. Young left the tent. By the dim light I surveyed "the room" and its furnishings, and wept to think that dear Confederate soldiers had deprived themselves of comforts that I might be comfortable. A handsome buffalo robe lay on the ground; and a coat nicely folded for a pillow, and a gray blanket for cover, invited me to repose. A small pan of water for morning ablution, and a towel and a mirrow about the size of a silver dollar, and a comb and brush, furnished every needed convenience. I removed the skirt of my dress that it might not be wrinkled in the morning, and my mantle for the same cause, and lay down and slept, oh, how sweetly, under the protecting care of those noble men, until awakened by the sweet familiar voice of my brother, saying, "Get up, sister, or you will not be ready for the roll call," was his never to be forgotten morning salutation. "As a short horse is soon curried," it required only a few moments to make myself presentable, and just as I was about announcing myself in

that condition, Thomie again appeared at the door with a plate containing my breakfast in one hand, and a tin cup containing a decoction, which he called coffee, in the other. "Here is your breakfast, sister;" and he added, "the ambulance is waiting to carry you to Lovejoy's station. Lieutenant Jewell and myself have been detailed to accompany you there."

The army wagons were already falling in line one after another and moving onward in a northwesterly direction; and what remained of the infantry and cavalry of that once magnificent army, which so often had achieved victory under General Joseph E. Johnston, had made their last grand bivouac on Georgia soil, and were moving onward in the line of march to Tennessee, under the command of Hood. They were leaving many a gallant comrade who had bitten the dust and drenched the soil of Georgia with their life blood, and although they must have feared that the flag they loved so well was now leading them to defeat, yet, not one of those true hearts would have deserted it for the wealth of India. As they marched in a different direction from that I was going to take, and the demand for rapid movement was imperative, I could not follow them long with my eye, but the memory of the little I saw will ever be fresh, and, like an inspiration, yet, to me, their burnished bayonets glittered in a perfect halo of glory, for the mists and clouds of the preceding day had passed away during the night, and a blue sky and bright sun gladdened the earth.

The two young lieutenants took seats opposite to me in the ambulance. Thus arranged, I caught every movement and look of that dear brother from whom I was so soon to part. He never looked more handsome, or appeared to greater advantage. I was his guest, and he entertained me with "a feast of reason and a flow of soul." At my request he sang some of the songs of "auld lang syne," but he preferred to talk of our mother and our sister. He recalled incidents of his childhood, and laughed heartily over some of them. He spoke of his Mary in Texas and his love for her, and he took from his vest pocket the impression of the foot and hand of his only child, a dear little boy whom he had never seen, and kissed them, and then folded them carefully and put them back in his pocket, and said:

"I must hurry back to Texas."

But back of all this glee and apparent hopefulness I saw, in characters unmistakable, that he was almost bereft of hope, and sustained only by Christian resignation.

We knew, by the immense crowd of people standing and sitting around on improvised seats, that we were approaching the station. The two soldiers got out of the ambulance with the elasticity of youth and health, and Thomie assisted me out. I stood for a moment as if uncertain where to go, and Lieutenant Jewel grasped my hand and said:

"Good-bye, dear Miss Mary!" and stepped back into the wagon and resumed his seat.

Seeing a large, square old house, which appeared to be full of people, Thomie and I advanced toward it a few steps. Suddenly, as if admonished that a soldier's duties should have precedence over everything else, he took me in his arms and kissed me fervently once, twice, thrice. I understood for whom they were intended—that trio of kisses. Not a word did he speak, and when he turned his back upon me I saw him brush off the silent tears, and more than one step was uneven before his nerves became steady and he ready to report for duty. I felt intuitively that I should never look upon his face again, and I watched him with riveted eyes until I could no longer see him, and then I gazed upon the vehicle containing him until it, too, disappeared forever from my sight. Then, and not till then, I gave way to pent-up sorrow, and cried as one without hope—unreservedly.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE RETURN HOME.

From Jonesboro via Augusta—Scenes and incidents by the way—The lonely journey from Stone Mountain to Decatur.

DAZED by a full realization that my brother and every male relative and friend were in the octopu arms of war, cruel and relentless, I stood riveted to the spot where my brother had parted from me, unti a gentle hand touched my shoulder, and a pleasant voice gave me friendly greeting. Turning, I saw Mrs. Anderson, sister of the brave and gallant Robert Alston, whose tragic fate is known to every reader in this country.

"I am glad to see you. I have just seen your brother Robert," I said.

"Where? Where? Do tell me that I may go to him!" cried this devoted sister, laughing and weeping alternately.

Having ascertained that the long train of exiles would not leave the station for several hours, I offered to conduct this tender-hearted woman to the camp-fire of her brother. The route took me over the same ground which only a few moments ago I had traveled with my own dear brother; and along which I had

seen so vividly a lean, gaunt, phantom hand pointing at his retreating form. Even the horses' tracks and the ruts made by the wheels could be plainly traced by their freshness and the yet quivering sands; and as I gazed upon them, I fancied they were connecting links between me and him which were binding our souls together, and which I would never grow weary in following. These reflections were often disturbed by questions about "my dear brother Robert," and by alternate sobs and laughter. The distance seemed much greater, now that I was walking it, but at length we attained our destination, the headquarters of a few of General John Morgan's gallant defenders of Southern homes and firesides. It would require the descriptive powers of a Sims or a Paul Hayne to give an adequate idea of the meeting on this occasion of this demonstrative brother and sister. I will not undertake to do so. He, too, was ready to move in that disastrous campaign, which lost to us the *creme de la creme* of the army of the Tennessee, and which aided, as if planned by the most astute federal tactitian, Sherman, in his "march to the sea."

During the interview between Col. Alston and his sister, it developed to him that his pretty home had been abandoned to the tender mercies of the enemy by the family in whose care he had left it, and that the Yankees had shipped his wife's elegant European piano, mirrors and furniture, as well as his library, cut-glass and Dresden china, to the North; and, besides, in the very malignity of envy and sectional

hate, had mutilated and desecrated his house in a shameful manner. His imprecations were fearful; and his vows to get even with the accursed Yankees were even more so. The lamb of a few moments ago was transformed into a lion, roaring and fierce. He accompanied his sister and myself on our return to the station; and never will I forget that walk.

The station reached, the scene of separation of brother and sister was again enacted, and he, too, went to battle fields, sanguinary and relentless, and she to peaceful retreats undisturbed by cannon's roar.

Here, as at Jonesboro, the face of the earth was literally covered with rude tents, and side-tracked cars, which were occupied by exiles from home—defenseless women and children, and an occasional old man tottering on the verge of the grave, awaiting their turn to be transported by over-taxed railroads farther into the constantly diminishing land of their love. During the afternoon I boarded an already well-filled southern bound train, and moved about among its occupants as if at home. For were we not one people —the mothers, wives and sisters of Confederates? The diversity of mind, disposition, and temper of this long train of representative women and children of Atlanta, and of many miles contiguous, who were carrying minds and hearts brimful of memories never to be obliterated, but rather to harden into asphalt preservation, was illustrated in various ways. Some laughed and talked and jested, and infused the light and warmth of their own sunny natures into others

less hopeful; some were morose and churlish, and saw no hope in the future and were impatient with those who did see the silver lining beyond the dark clouds suspended over us; and some very plainly indicated that if our cause failed, they would lose all faith in a prayer-answering God; and others saw wisdom and goodness in all His ways and dispensations, and were willing to submit to any chastisement if it only brought them nearer to the Mercy Seat.

After many delays and adventures, not of sufficient importance to relate, I reached Griswoldville. Here I was received with open arms by that good old father and mother in Israel, Rev. Dr. John S. Wilson and his wife, and his excellent family, whom I found residing in an old freight car. But they were living in a palace compared to many of their neighbors and friends, who had scarcely a shelter to protect them from the inclemency of the weather. Every moment of time with these good people was spent in answering questions, and receiving blessings. Not long after this pleasant meeting, Stoneman's raiders came into Griswoldville, and the household effects of Dr. Wilson's family were consumed by devouring torches. All their winter clothing, the doctor's library, and his manuscript sermons, were burned to ashes. These sermons were the result of the study and experience of forty years. But this grand old soldier of the cross, although on the verge of three score years and ten, faltered not; for his eye was fixed on the goal of his Heavenly inheritance. Wherever he went, he still

preached; and died a few years afterwards at his post in Atlanta, having missed but two preaching appointments in all his ministry, and one of these on the Sabbath before he died.

By a circuitous route, which I can now scarcely recall, in the course of time I reached Augusta, the beautiful. I wended my way through crowded thoroughfares to the residence of friends on Green street, where my sister had sojourned for several weeks, far from the distracting confusion of warfare. After all these long and varied years, I never see that Elysian street without feeling as if I would like to kneel and kiss the ground whereon she found surcease of hostile tread and rancorous foe.

I could scarcely approach the house, in exterior beautiful in all that makes a home attractive. I feared that within sorrowful tidings might await me. No word of the absent sister had come through the enemy's line since they were first established, and now I dreaded to hear. More than once I stood still and tried to nerve myself for the worst tidings that could be communicated. And then I ascended the stone steps and rang the door-bell. When the butler came, I hurriedly asked him if Miss Stokes was in. As if apprehending my state of feeling, he answered with a broad African grin: "She is, ma'am."

The pressure of a mountain was removed from my heart, and with a lighter step than I had taken for sometime, I entered that friendly portal, a welcome guest. A moment sufficed for him to carry the joy-

ous tidings of my presence to my sister, and, as if by magic, she was with me. O, the joy and the sadness of our meeting! To say that each of us was glad beyond our ability to express it, would be a tame statement; and yet neither of us was happy. There was too much sadness connected with ourselves and our country to admit of happiness; yet the report of our mother's fortitude and usually good health, and the hopeful spirits of our brother, and his numerous messages of love and playful phraseology, cheered my sister so much that she rallied and did all she could to render my brief stay with her as pleasant as possible. And there was a charm in her sweet voice and pleasant words that were soothing to me, and did much to assuage my own grief. Nor were our good friends wanting in efforts of like character. They, too, had drank deep of Marah's bitter waters. Two noble boys, yet in their teens, had been laid upon the sacrificial altar, an oblation to their country. And a fair young girl had gone down into the tomb, as much a sacrifice to Southern rights as if slain on the battle field. One other girl and her war-stricken parents survived, and they were devoting their lives to the encouragement of those similarly bereaved.

Although I knew it would pain her greatly, I thought it would be wrong to leave without telling my sister about Toby's death, and, therefore, I told her. Like our brother, she wept, but not as one without hope. She had been his spiritual instructor, and had thoroughly taught him the great,

and yet easy plan, of salvation; and I have never doubted that he caught on to it, and was supported by the arm of Jesus, as he "passed through the dark valley and the shadow of death." The time for leaving this peaceful retreat came, and was inexorable; nor would I have stayed, if I could. There was a widowed mother, whose head was whitened, not so much by the frosts of winters as by sorrow and care, grief and bereavement, awaiting my coming—oh, so anxiously! Waiting to hear from the soldier son, who, even for her sake, and that of his gentle young wife and baby boy in Texas, would listen to no plan of escape from the dangers involved by his first presidential vote. Waiting to hear from the fair young daughter, whom she preferred to banish from home rather than have her exposed to the rude chances of war. That she might not be kept in painful suspense, I determined not to linger on the way. I, therefore, took the morning train on the good old reliable Georgia railroad, for Social Circle. The parting from my sister pained me exceedingly; but I knew she had put her trust in the Lord, and He would take care of her. It may be asked why I did not have the same faith regarding the preservation of my brother. He, too, was a Christian. "He that taketh the sword shall perish by the sword," is a Divine assertion, and it was constantly repeating itself in my ears; yea, I had heard him repeat it with emphasis.

The trip from Augusta to Social Circle was replete with melancholy interest, and differed very materially

from the trip from Atlanta to Jonesboro. Here those who had the courage to do so were returning to their homes, and were on the *qui vive* for every item of news obtainable from within the enemy's lines; but nothing satisfactory encouraged their hope of better treatment. One marked difference appeared in the character of those who were venturing homeward. There were scarcely any young persons—not a single young lady. The good old mother railroad was very deliberate in her movements, and gave her patrons time to get acquainted and chat a little on the way, and this we did without restraint.

We discussed the situation, and narrated our diversified experiences, and this interchange of thought and feeling brought us very near together, and made us wondrous kind to one another. At one of the stations at which the train stopped, and had to wait a long while, I saw several of the young soldiers from Decatur. Among them was Ryland Holmes, and, I think, Mose Brown.

About a dozen ladies were going within the enemy's lines, and would there separate for their respective homes. We agreed to hire a wagon team and driver at Social Circle, that we might take it "turn about" in riding to Stone Mountain. As I was the only one going beyond that point, I determined to take my chances from there for getting to Decatur, and go on foot if need be. Our plan was successful, as, after much effort we obtained an old rickety wagon, which had doubtless done good service in its day, and a

yoke of mis-mated oxen, and a negro driver. For this equipage we paid an enormous sum, and thinking we ought to have the full benefit of it, we all got into the wagon to take a ride. Compassion for the oxen, however, soon caused first one and then another to descend to the ground, and march in the direction of home, sometimes two abreast and sometimes in single file. Night overtook us at a house only a short distance from the Circle, and in a body we appealed for shelter beneath its roof. The man of the family was at home, under what circumstances I have never heard, and to him we appealed, and from him we received an ungracious "permit" to stay in his house. Seeing no inviting prospect for rest and repose, I established myself in a corner, and took out of my reticule some nice German wool that had been given to me by my friends in Augusta, and cast on the stitches for a throat-warmer, or, in the parlance of that day, "a comforter." Mine host watched the process with much interest. When the pattern developed, he admired it, and expressed a wish to have one like it. Glad of the privilege to liquidate my indebtedness for the prospective night's shelter, I told him if he would furnish the material I would knit him one just like it. The material seemed to be in waiting, and was brought forward, soft, pretty lamb's wool thread, and I put it in my already well-filled hand satchel to await future manipulation. The accommodation in the way of bedding was inadequate, and more than one of our party passed a sleepless night;

but what mattered it? Were we not Confederate soldiers, or very near akin to them?

As the first sunbeams were darting about among the tree-tops, I donned my bonnet, and bade adieu to our entertainers, and started on my journey homeward, walking. Being in the very vigor of womanhood, and in perfect health, I never experienced the sensation of fatigue, and I verily believe I could have walked to my desolated home sooner than the most of the resources within our means could have carried me; and I was impatient under the restraint and hindrance of slow teams. Hence my start in advance of the other ladies. And I wanted to be alone. The pent up tears were constantly oozing out of my eyes and trickling down my face, and I wanted to open the flood gates and let them flow unrestrainedly. I wanted to cry aloud like a baby. I plunged into the woods, for the seldom traveled road was scarcely a barrier to perfect solitude. I walked rapidly, and closed my eyes to all the attractions of nature lest they divert my mind, and appease my hungry heart. I wanted to cry, and was even then doing so, before I got ready for it. At length I came to a rivulet of crystal water, as pure as the dew drops of Arcadia. I sat down beside it and mingled the anguished tears of my very soul, with its sparkling, ever-changing, nectarian waters. I bathed my hot face and hands in the pellucid stream, and still the lachrymal fountain flowed on. I thought of my lonely mother, surrounded by those who were seeking the subversion of all

that her heart held dear, and I cried. I thought of my brother—of his toilsome marches and weary limbs, and of his consecrated life—and I cried. I thought of the fair young sister, still hopeful in early womanhood, and I refused to be comforted, and wept bitterly. In this disconsolate frame of mind, I was ready to give up all hope and yield to direful despair. At this fearful crisis a still small voice whispered, "Peace, be still!" The glamour of love invested sky and earth with supernal glory. The fountain of tears ceased to flow, and I looked around upon the handiwork of the Great Supreme Being in whose creation I was but an atom, and wondered that He should have been mindful of me—that He should have given surcease of agony to my sorrowing soul. All nature changed as if by magic, and the witchery of the scene was indescribable. The pretty wildwood flowers, as I bent my admiring gaze upon them, seemed to say in beautiful silent language, "Look aloft." The birds, as they trilled their morning roundelay, said in musical numbers, "Look aloft;" and the merry little rivulet at my feet affected seriousness, and whispered, "Look aloft." Thus admonished, "in that moment of darkness, with scarce hope in my heart," I looked aloft—looked aloft.

By and by the ladies came in sight, some walking and others riding in the wagon; and I pitied most those who were in the wagon. As soon as they were within speaking distance, one of the ladies said: "You should have stayed for breakfast. It was quite appe-

tizing." Reminded of what I had lost, I was led to compare it with what I had gained, and I would not have exchanged loss and gain for anything in the world. I had to admit, however, that there was a vacuum that needed replenishing; but I was inured to hunger, and, save a passing thought, I banished all desire for food, and thought only of the loved ones, so near, and yet so far, and in spite of myself the fountain of tears was again running over.

The long tramp to the Stone Mountain was very lonely. Not a living thing overtook or passed us, and we soon crossed over the line and entered a war-stricken section of country where stood chimneys only, where lately were pretty homes and prosperity, now departed. Ah, those chimneys standing amid smouldering ruins! No wonder they were called "Sherman's sentinels," as they seemed to be keeping guard over those scenes of desolation. The very birds of the air and beasts of the field had fled to other sections. By constant and unflagging locomotion we reached Stone Mountain sometime during the night. We went to the hotel and asked shelter and protection, and received both, but not where to lay our heads, as those who had preceded us had filled every available place. I had friends in the village, but I had no assurance that they had remained at home, and weathered the cyclone of war. Therefore, early in the morning, hungry and footsore, I started all alone walking to Decatur. The solitude was terrific, and the feeling of awe was so intense that I was

startled by the breaking of a twig or the gruesome sound of my own footsteps. Constantly reminded by ruined homes, I realized that I was indeed within the arbitrary lines of a cruel, merciless foe, and but for my lonely mother, anxiously waiting my return, I should have turned and ran for dear life until again within the boundaries of Dixie.

I must have walked very rapidly, for, before I was aware of it, I found myself approaching Judge Bryce's once beautiful but now dilapidated home. He and his good wife gave me affectionate greeting and something to inflate a certain vacuum which had become painfully clamorous. And they also gave me that which was even more acceptable—a large yam potato, and a piece of sausage to take to my mother.

I begged Judge Bryce to go with me at least part of the way to Decatur; but he was afraid to leave his wife. His experience with the yankees had not been an exceptional case. They had robbed him of everything of value, silver, gold, etc., and what they could not carry away, they had destroyed, and he denied most emphatically that there was a single gentleman in the Federal army. In vain did I tell him that we owed the preservation of our lives to the protection extended to us by the few gentlemen who were in it.

After a brief rest, I resumed my way homeward, and oh, with what heart-sickening forebodings I approached that sacred though desolated abode! Anon the little town appeared in the distance, and upon its very limits I met several of Col. Garrard's cavalry

officers. Among them a diversity of temper was displayed. Some of them appeared very glad to see me; and, to anxious inquiries regarding my mother, they replied that they had taken good care of her in my absence, and that I ought to have rewarded them for having done so by bringing "my pretty young sister" home with me. Although I did not entertain one iota of respect for the Federal army as a whole, I knew there were a few in its ranks who were incapable of the miserable conduct of the majority, and my heart went out in very tender gratitude to them, especially to those who had sought to lessen the anguish of my mother. These men threw the reins into the hands of out-riders, and got off their horses and walked with me to the door of my home. Their headquarters were still in the yard and had been ever since first established there, with the exception of a very few days. My return was truly a memorable occasion. Manifestations assured me that the highest as well as the lowest in that command was glad to see me, and in their hearts welcomed me home. To good Mr. Fred Williams I was indebted, in a large measure, for kindly feeling and uniform respect from that portion of the Federal army with which I came in contact.

My mother had seen me coming, and had retreated into as secluded a place as she could find, to compose herself for the meeting; but the effort was in vain. She trembled like an aspen leaf, her lips quivered, and her tongue could not articulate the words she

would have spoken. Alas! the tension was more than she could bear. I dwelt upon the fact that Thomie and Missouri were well, and had sent her a world of love. I tried to infuse hope and cheerfulness into everything I told her, but she could not see it, and her poor over-taxed heart could bear up no longer, and she cried as Rachel weeping for her children, long and piteously. No purer tears were ever borne by heaven-commissioned Peri into the presence of a compassionate Savior, than those shed by that patriotic though sorrowing mother.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON THE VERGE OF STARVATION.

A worn-out army horse is found.—Uncle Mack makes a wagon—I make a unique trip—Starvation is warded off—Dangers and scenes by the way.

"WHAT is it, Ma, has anything happened?"

"No, only Maggie Benedict has been here crying as if her heart would break, and saying that her children are begging her for bread, and she has none to give them. Give me a little of the meal or hominy that you have, that we may not starve until we can get something else to eat, and then take the remainder to her that she may cook it as quickly as possible for her suffering children."

We had spent the preceding day in picking out grains of corn from cracks and crevices in bureau drawers, and other improvised troughs for federal horses, as well as gathering up what was scattered upon the ground. In this way by diligent and persevering work, about a half bushel was obtained from the now deserted camping ground of Garrard's cavalry, and this corn was thoroughly washed and dried, and carried by me and Telitha to a poor little mill, (which had escaped conflagration, because too humble to

attract attention), and ground into coarse meal. Returning from this mill, and carrying, myself, a portion of the meal, I saw in the distance my mother coming to meet me. Apprehensive of evil, I ran to meet her and asked:

"What is it, Ma? Has anything happened?"

With flushed face and tear-toned voice, she replied as already stated. My heart was touched, and a division was soon made. Before starting on this errand, I thought of the probable delay that inexperience, and perhaps the want of cooking utensils and fuel, might occasion, and suggested that it would hasten relief to the children to cook some bread and mush and carry it to them ready for use. A boiling pot, left on the camping ground, was soon on the fire ready to receive the well-prepared batter, which was to be converted into nutricious mush or porridge. Nor was the bread forgotten. While the mush was cooking, the hoe-cakes were baking in good old plantation style. These were arranged one upon another, and tied up in a snow white cloth; and a tin bucket, also a trophy from the company, was filled with the hot mush. I took the bread, and Telitha the bucket, and walked rapidly to Doctor Holmes' residence, where Maggie Benedict, whose husband was away in the Confederate army, had rooms for herself and her children. The Rev. Doctor and his wife had refugeed, leaving this young mother and her children alone and unprotected.

The scene which I witnessed will never be oblit-

erated from my memory. On the doorsteps sat the young mother, beautiful in desolation, with a baby in her arms, and on either side of her a little one, piteously crying for something to eat. "Oh, mama, I want something to eat, so bad." "O, mama, I am so hungry—give me something to eat." Thus the children were begging for what the mother had not to give. She could only give them soothing words. But relief was at hand. Have you ever enjoyed the satisfaction of appeasing the hunger of children who had been without food until on the verge of starvation? If not, one of the keenest enjoyments of life has been denied you. O, the thankfulness of such a privilege! And oh, the joy, melancholy though it be, of hearing blessings invoked upon you and yours by the mother of those children!

While this needful food was being eaten with a zest known only to the hungry, I was taking in the situation, and devising in my own mind means by which to render more enduring relief. The meal we had on hand would soon be exhausted, and, though more might be procured in the same way, it would be hazardous to depend upon that way only. "God helps those who help themselves," is a good old reliable proverb that cannot be too deeply impressed upon the mind of every child. To leave this young mother in a state of absolute helplessness, and her innocent little ones dependent upon the precarious support which might be gleaned from a devastated country would be

cruel indeed; but how to obviate this state of affairs was a serious question.

The railroad having been torn up in every direction communicating with Decatur, there seemed to be but one alternative—to walk—and that was not practicable with several small children.

"Maggie, this state of affairs cannot be kept up; have you no friend to whom you can go?"

"Yes," she replied, "Mr. Benedict has a sister near Madison, who has wanted me and the children to go and stay with her ever since he has been in the army, but I was too independent to do it."

"Absurd! Well, the time has come that you must go. Get the children ready, and I will call for you soon," and without any positive or defined plan of procedure, I took leave of Maggie and her children. I was working by faith, and the Lord directed my footsteps. On my way home I hunted up "Uncle Mack," a faithful old negro man, who preferred freedom in the midst of privation with his own white people, to following the federal army around on "Uncle Sam's" pay-roll, and got from him a promise that he would construct a wagon out of the odds and ends left upon the streets of Decatur. The next thing to be done was to provide a horse, and not being a magician, nor possessed of Aladdin's lamp, this undertaking must have seemed chimerical to those who had not known how often and how singularly these scarcely formulated plans had developed into success. This day had been one of constant

and active service, and was only one of many that furnished from sixteen to eighteen working hours. No wonder, then, that exhausted nature succumbed to sleep that knew no waking until the dawn of another day.

Next morning, before the sun rose, accompanied by the Morton girls, I was on my way to "the canebrakes." I had seen many horses, whose places had been taken by others captured from farmers, abandoned and sent out to the canebrakes to recuperate or to die, the latter being the more probable. Without any definite knowledge of the locality, but guided by an over-ruling providence, I went direct to the canebrake, and there soon made a selection of a horse, which, from the assortment at hand, could not have been improved upon. By a dexterous throw of a lasso, constructed and managed by the young friends already mentioned, he was soon captured and on his way to Decatur to enter "rebel" service. His most conspicuous feature was a pair of as fine eyes as ever illuminated a horse's head, large, brown and lustrous. There were other conspicuous things about him, too; for instance, branded upon each of his sides were the tell-tale letters, "U. S.," and on his back was an immense sore which also told tales. By twelve o'clock, noon, Uncle Mack appeared upon the scene, pulling something which he had improvised which baffles description, and which, for the sake of the faithful service I obtained from it, I will not attempt to describe, though it might provoke the risibilities of the reader.

Suffice it to say that as it carried living freight in safety over many a bridge, in honor of this I will call it a wagon. Uncle Mack soon had the horse secured to this vehicle by ropes and pieces of crocus sacks, for harness was as scarce a commodity as wagons and horses. I surveyed the equipage from center to circumference, with emotions pathetic and amusing. It was awfully suggestive. And as I viewed it in all its grotesqueness my imagination pictured a collapse, and my return home from no very distant point upon my all-fours, with one of the fours dragging after me in a dilapidated condition. I distinctly heard the derisive gibberish and laughtre of old Momus, and thought I should explode in the effort to keep from joining in his mirthfulness. As I turned my head to take a sly glance at my mother, our eyes met, and all restraint was removed. With both of us laughter and sobs contended for the mastery, and merriment and tears literally blended. Thus equipped, and with a benediction from my mother, expressed more by looks and acts than by words, I gathered the ropes and started like Bayard Taylor to take "Views a Foot," and at the same time accomplish an errand of mercy which would lead me, as I led the horse, over a portion of country that in dreariness and utter desolation baffles description—enough to know that Sherman's foraging trains had been over it. Leading the horse, which was already christened "Yankee," to Dr. Holme's door, I called Maggie to come on with her children.

"I can't bring my things out, Miss Mary. Somebody must come to carry them and put them in the wagon."

"I can," I said, and, suiting the action to the word, ran into the house, where to my amazement three large trunks confronted me. What was to be done? If they could be got into the wagon, what guarantee was there that poor Yankee could haul them in that cumbersome vehicle? However, I went for Uncle Mack to put the trunks in the wagon, and in front of them, in close proximity to the horses' heels, was placed a chair in which Maggie seated herself and took her baby in her lap, the other children nestling on rugs at her feet.

Poor Yankee seemed to feel the importance of his mission, and jogged along at a pretty fair speed, and I, who walked by his side and held the ropes, found myself more than once obliged to strike a trot in order to maintain control of him. Paradoxical as it may seem, I enjoyed this new phase in my service to the Confederacy—none but a patriot could render it, and the whole thing seemed invested with the glamour of romance, the sequel of which would be redemption from all connection with a people who could thus afflict another people of equal rights. While Maggie hummed a sweet little lullaby to her children, I contemplated the devastation and ruin on every side. Not a vestige of anything remained to mark the sites of the pretty homes which had dotted this fair country before the destroyer came, except

perhaps, a standing chimney now and then. And all this struck me as the willing sacrifice of a peerless people for a great principle, and looking through the dark vista I saw light ahead—I saw white-robed peace proclaiming that the end of carnage had come. Even then, as I jogged along, at a snail's pace, (for be it known Yankee was not uniform in his gait, and as his mistress had relaxed the tension of the ropes, he had relaxed the speed of his steps,) up a pretty little hill, from whose summit I had often gazed with rapturous admiration upon the beautiful mountain of granite near by, I had so completely materialized the Queen of Peace that I saw her on that mountain's crest, scattering with lavish hand blessings and treasures as a recompense for the destruction so wantonly inflicted. Thus my hopeful temperament furnished consolation to me, even under darkest circumstances.

Maggie and the children became restive in their pent-up limits, and the latter clamored for something to eat, but there was nothing to give them. Night was upon us, and we had come only about eight miles, and not an animate thing had we seen since we left Decatur, not even a bird, and the silence was unbroken save by the sound of the horse's feet as he trod upon the rocks, and the soft sweet humming of the young mother to her dear little ones. Step by step we seemed to descend into the caverns of darkness, and my brave heart began to falter. The children, awe-struck, had ceased their appeal for bread, and

nestled closer to their mother, and that they might all the more feel her protecting presence, she kept up a constant crooning sound, pathetic and sad. Step by step we penetrated the blackness of night—a night without a moon, starless and murky. The unerring instinct of an animal was all we had to guide us in the beaten road, which had ceased to be visible to human ken.

A faint glimmer of light, at apparently no very great distance, gave hope that our day's journey was almost ended. Yankee also caught the inspiration, and walked a little faster. Though the time seemed long, the cabin, for such it proved to be, was finally reached, and I dropped the ropes, and, guided by the glimmer of light through the cracks, went to the door and knocked, at the same time announcing my name. The door was quickly opened. Imagine my surprise when recognized and cordially welcomed by a sweet friend, whose most humble plantation cabin was a pretty residence in comparison with the one she now occupied. Maggie, too, as the daughter of a well-known physician, received cordial welcome for herself and children. And thus a kind Providence provided a safe lodging place for the night.

Nature again asserted itself, and the children asked for something to eat. The good lady of the house kissed them, and told them that supper would soon be ready. The larger one of her little sons drew from a bed of ashes, which had been covered by glowing coals, some large yam potatoes which he took to a table and

peeled. He then went outside the cabin and drew from a keg an earthen-ware pitcher full of sparkling persimmon beer, which he dispensed to us in cups, and then handed around the potatoes. And how much this repast was enjoyed! Good sweet yams thoroughly cooked, and the zestful persimmon beer! And I thought of the lonely mother at a desolated home, whose only supper had been something made of coarse meal, ground from corn which her own hands helped to pick from crevices and cracks in improvised troughs, where Garrard's cavalry had fed their horses. After awhile the sweet womanly spirit that presided over this little group, got a quilt and a shawl or two, and made a pallet for the children. The boys put more wood upon the fire, and some in the jambs of the fire-place, to be used during the night; and then they went behind us and lay down upon the floor, with seed cotton for pillows, and the roof for covering. Our kind hostess placed additional wraps over the shoulders of Maggie and myself, and we three sat up in our chairs and slept until the dawn.

Accustomed to looking after out-door interests, I went out to see how Yankee was coming on, and found him none the worse for the preceding day's toil. Everything indicated that he had fared as sumptuously as we had—a partly eaten pumpkin, corn, whole ears yet in the trough, and fodder near by, plainly showed the generosity of the noble little family that took us in and gave us the best they had.

After breakfast we bade adieu to the good mother and her children, and went on our way, if not rejoicing, at least feeling better for having seen and been with such good people. There was a strong tie between us all. The husband and father was off in the army, like our loved ones. The generous feeding given to our steed had so braced him up that he began to walk faster, and was keenly appreciative of every kind word; and I and he formed a friendship for each other that continued to his dying day. The road was very rough and hilly, and more than once he showed signs of fatigue; but a word of encouragement seemed to renew his strength, and he walked bravely on. Maggie would perhaps have lightened his load by walking, now and then, but the jolting of the wagon kept the trunks in perpetual motion, and the lives of the children would thereby have been jeopardized.

Nothing of special interest transpired this second day of our journey. The same fiend of destruction had laid his ruthless hand upon everything within his reach. The woods had been robbed of their beauty and the fields of their products; not even a bird was left to sing a requiem over the scene of desolation, nor an animal to suggest where once had been a habitation. Once, crouching near a standing chimney, there was a solitary dog who kept at bay every attempt to approach—no kind word would conciliate or put him off his guard. Poor, lonely sentinel! Did he remember that around the once cheerful hearth-

stone he had been admitted to a place with the family group? Was he awaiting his master's return? Ah, who can know the emotions, or the dim reasonings of that faithful brute!

Night again came on and I discovered that we were approaching the hospitable mansion of Mr. Montgomery, an excellent, courtly country gentleman, who was at home under circumstances not now remembered. He and his interesting family gladly welcomed me and my little charge and entertained us most hospitably. The raiders had been here and helped themselves bountifully, but they had spared the house for another time, and that other time came soon, and nothing was left on the site of this beautiful home but ubiquitous chimneys.

An early start the next day enabled Yankee to carry Maggie and her children and the trunks to Social Circle in time to take the noon train for Madison. So far as Maggie and her children were concerned I now felt that I had done all that I could, and that I must hasten back to my lonely mother at Decatur; but Maggie's tearful entreaties not to be left among strangers prevailed with me, and I got aboard the train with her, and never left her until I had placed her and her children in the care of good Mr. Thrasher at Madison, to be conveyed by him to the home of Mrs. Reeves, her husband's sister.

In Madison I, too, had dear friends and relatives, with whom I spent the night, and the morning's train bore me back to Social Circle, then the terminus of

the Georgia railroad—the war fiend having destroyed every rail between there and Atlanta. Arriving there, imagine my surprise and indignation when I learned that Mr. R——, whom I had paid in advance to care for Yankee while I was gone to Madison, had sent him out to his sorghum mill and put him to grinding cane; and it was with much difficulty and delay that I got him in time to start on my homeward journey that afternoon. Instead of his being rested, he was literally broken down, and my pity for him constrained me to walk every step of the way back to Decatur. While waiting for the horse I purchased such articles of food as I could find. For instance, a sack of flour, for which I paid a hundred dollars; a bushel of potatoes; several gallons of sorghum; a few pounds of butter, and a few pounds of meat. Even this was a heavy load for the poor jaded horse. Starting so late I could only get to the hospitable home of Mr. Crew, distant only about three miles from "The Circle."

Before leaving Mr. Crew's, the next morning, I learned that an immense yankee raid had come out from Atlanta, and had burned the bridge which I had crossed only two days ago. This information caused me to take another route to Decatur, and my heart lost much of its hope, and my step its alacrity. Yet the Lord sustained me in the discharge of duty. I never wavered when there was a principal to be guarded, or a duty to be performed. Those were praying days with me, and now I fervently invoked

God's aid and protection in my perilous undertaking, and I believed that He would grant aid and protection.

That I might give much needed encouragement to Yankee, I walked by his side with my hand upon his shoulder much of the time, an act of endearment which be greatly appreciated, and proved that he did so by the expression of his large brown eyes. One of my idiosyncrasies through life, has been that of counting everything, and as I journeyed homeward, I found myself counting my steps from one to a thousand and one. As there is luck in odd numbers, says Rory O'Moore, I always ended with the traditional odd number, and by telling Yankee how much nearer home we were. And I told him many things, among them, *soto voce*, that I did not believe he was a yankee, but a captured rebel. If a tuft of grass appeared on the road side, he was permitted to crop it; or if a muscadine vine with its tempting grapes was discovered, he cropped the leaves off the low shrubbery, while I gathered the grapes for my mother at home with nothing to eat save the one article of diet, of which I have told before.

A minute description of this portion of the war-stricken country would fill a volume; but only the leading incidents and events of the journey are admissible in a reminiscence of war times. In the early part of the day, during this solitary drive, I came to a cottage by the wayside that was a perfect gem—an oasis, an everything that could thrill the heart by

its loveliness. Flowers of every hue beautified the grounds and sweetened the air, and peace and plenty seemed to hold undisputed sway. The Fiend of Destruction had not yet reached this little Eden. Two gentlemen were in the yard conversing. I perceived at a glance that they were of the clerical order, and would fain have spoken to them; but not wishing to disturb them, or attract attention to myself, I was passing by as unobtrusively as possible, when I was espied and recognized by one of them, who proved to be that saintly man, Rev. Walter Branham. He introduced me to his friend, Professor Shaw of Oxford. Their sympathy for me was plainly expressed, and they gave me much needed instruction regarding the route, and suggested that I would about get to Rev. Henry Clark's to put up for the night. With a hearty shake of the hand, and "God bless you, noble woman," I pursued my lonely way, and they went theirs. No other adventure enlivened the day, and poor patient Yankee did the best he could, and so did I. It was obvious that he had done about all he could. Grinding sorghum under a hard taskmaster, with an empty stomach, had told on him, and he could no longer quicken his pace at the sound of a friendly voice.

At length we came in sight of "Uncle Henry Clark's" place. I stood amazed, bewildered. I felt as if I would sink to the ground, yea, through it. I was riveted to the spot on which I stood. I could not move. At length I cried—cried like a woman in

despair. Poor Yankee must have cried too, (for water ran out of his eyes) and in some measure I was quieted, for misery loves company, and I began to take in the situation more calmly. Elegant rosewood and mahogany furniture, broken into a thousand fragments, covered the face of the ground as far as I could see; and china and glass looked as if it had been sown. And the house, what of that? Alas! it too had been scattered to the four winds of heaven in the form of smoke and ashes. Not even a chimney stood to mark its site. Near by stood a row of negro cabins, intact, showing that while the conflagration was going on they had been sedulously guarded. And these cabins were occupied by the slaves of the plantation. Men, women and children stalked about in restless uncertainty, and in surly indifference. They had been led to believe that the country would be apportioned to them; but they had sense enough to know that such a mighty revolution involved trouble and delay, and they were supinely awaiting developments. Neither man, woman nor child approached me. There was mutual distrust and mutual avoidance.

It took less time to take in this situation than it has to describe it. The sun was almost down, and as he turned his large red face upon me, I fancied he fain would have stopped in his course to see me out of this dilemma. What was I to do? The next nearest place that I could remember that would perhaps give protection for the night, was Mr. Fowler's, and this was my only hope. With one hand upon Yankee's

shoulder, and the ropes in the other, I moved on, and not until my expiring breath will I forget the pleading look which that poor dumb animal turned upon me when I started. Utterly helpless, and in my hands, he wondered how I could thus exact more of him. I wondered myself. But what was I to do but to move on? And with continuous supplication for the Lord to have mercy upon me, I moved on. More than once the poor horse turned that look, beseeching and pathetic, upon me. It frightened me. I did not understand it, and still moved on. At last the hope of making himself understood forsook him, and he deliberately laid himself down in the road. I knelt by his side and told him the true state of affairs, and implored him not to desert me in this terrible crisis. I told him how cruel it would be to do so, and used many arguments of like character; but they availed nothing. He did not move, and his large, lustrous brown eyes seemed to say for him: "I have done all I can, and can do no more." And the sun could bear it no longer, and hid his crimson face behind a great black cloud.

What could I do but rise from my imploring attitude and face my perilous situation? "Lord have mercy upon me," was my oft-repeated invocation. The first thing which greeted my vision when I rose to my feet was a very distant but evidently an advancing object. I watched it with bated breath, and soon had the satisfaction of seeing a man on mule back. I ran to meet him, saying: "O, sir, I know

the good Lord has sent you here!" And then I recounted my trouble, and received most cordial sympathy from one who had been a Confederate soldier, but who was now at home in consequence of wounds that incapacitated him for further service. When he had heard all, he said:

"I would take you home with me, but I have to cross a swimming creek before getting there, and I am afraid to undertake to carry you. Wait here until I see these negroes. They are a good set, and whatever they promise, they will, I think, carry out faithfully."

The time seemed interminable before he came back, and night, black night, had set in; and yet a quiet resignation sustained me.

When my benefactor returned, two negro men came with him, one of whom brought a lantern bright and cheery. "I have arranged for you to be cared for here," said he. "Several of the old house servants of Mrs. Clark know you, and they will prove themselves worthy of the trust we repose in them." I accepted the arrangement made by this good man, and entrusted myself to the care of the negroes for the night. This I did with great trepidation, but as soon as I entered the cabin an assurance of safety filled my mind with peace, and reconciled me to my surroundings. The "mammy" that presided over it, met me with a cordial welcome and assured me that no trouble would befall me under her roof. An easy chair was placed for me in one corner, in comfortable prox-

imity to a large plantation fire. In a few minutes the men came in, bringing my flour, potatoes, syrup, bacon, etc. This sight gave me real satisfaction, as I thought of my poor patient mother at home, and hoped that in some way I should yet be able to convey to her this much needed freight. I soon espied a table on which was piled many books and magazines, "Uncle Henry Clark's" theological books were well represented. I proposed reading to the women, if they would like to hear me, and soon had their undivided attention, as well as that of several of the men, who sat on the door steps. In this way several hours passed, and then "mammy" said, "You must be getting sleepy." "Oh, no," I replied, "I frequently sit up all night reading." But this did not satisfy her; she had devised in her own mind something more hospitable for her guest, and she wanted to see it carried out. Calling into requisition the assistance of the men, she had two large cedar chests placed side by side, and out of these chests were taken nice clean quilts, and snow white counterpanes, and sheets, and pillows—Mrs. Clark's beautiful bed-clothing—and upon those chests was made a pallet upon which a queen might have reposed with comfort. It was so tempting in its cleanliness that I consented to lie down. The sole occupants of that room that night, were myself, and my hostess,—the aforesaid black "mammy." Rest, not sleep, came to my relief. The tramping of feet, and now and then the muffled sound of human voices, kept me in a listening attitude, and it must be

confessed in a state of painful apprehension. Thus the night passed.

With the dawn of day, I was up, and ready to meet the day's requirements. "Mammy's" first greeting was "What's your hurry?" "I am accustomed to early rising. May I open the door?" The first thing I saw was Yankee, and he was standing and eating; but he was evidently too weak to attempt the task of getting that cumbersome vehicle and its freight to Decatur. So I arranged with one of the men to put a steer to the wagon and carry them home. This he was to do for the sum of one hundred dollars. After an appetizing breakfast, I started homeward, leading Yankee in the rear of this turnout. Be it remembered, I did not leave without making ample compensation for my night's entertainment.

No event of particular interest occurred on the way to Decatur. Yankee walked surprisingly well, and the little steer acquitted himself nobly. In due time Decatur appeared in sight, and then there ensued a scene which for pathos defies description. Matron and maiden, mother and child, each with a tin can picked up off the enemy's camping ground, ran after me and begged for just a little something to eat—just enough to keep them from starving. Not an applicant was refused, and by the time the poor, rickety, cumbersome wagon reached its destination, its contents had been greatly diminished. But there was yet enough left to last for some time the patient, loving mother, the faithful Telitha, and myself.

A summary of the trip developed these facts: To the faithfulness of Uncle Mack was due the holding together of the most grotesque vehicle ever dignified by the name of wagon; over all that rough road it remained intact, and returned as good as when it started. And, but for the sorghum grinding, poor Yankee would have acted his part unfalteringly. As for myself, I labored under the hallucination that I was a Confederate soldier, and deemed no task too great for me to essay, if it but served either directly or indirectly those who were fighting my battles.

CHAPTER XV.

A SECOND TRIP FOR SUPPLIES.

Gathering "fodder" from a cane-brake as a preliminary—The lonely journey—Changing Yankee's name—I meet the Federal raiders.

At an early hour in the morning of a bright autumnal day, in that memorable year 1864—the saddest of them all—Yankee was roped, (not bridled, mark you,) and crocus sacks, four for him, one for Telitha, and one for myself, thrown over his back, and we three, boon companions in diversified industries, scampered off to a neighboring cane-brake—a favorite resort in those days, but now, alas for human gratitude! never visited for the sake of "auld lang syne."

Perfect health—thanks to the parents who transmitted no constitutional taint to my veins—unusual strength, and eslasticity of motion, soon carried me there, and having secured Yankee to a clump of canes luxuriant with tender twigs and leaves, sweetened by the cool dews of the season, Telitha and I entered upon the work of cutting twigs and pulling fodder.

There being no drainage in those times, I often stepped upon little hillocks, covered with grass or

some aquatic vegetation, that yielded to my weight, and I sank into the mud and water ankle keep, at least, and Telitha was going through with similar experiences. I often laughed at her grimaces and other expressions of disgust in the slough of despond, and rejoiced with her when she displayed the trophies of success, consisting of nice brittle twigs, generously clad in tender leaves and full growth; Yankee too, was unmindful of small difficulties, and did his "level best" in providing for a rainy day by filling his capacious paunch brimful of the good things so bountifully supplied by Providence in the marshes of old DeKalb. By the time the aforesaid half dozen sacks were filled, the enlargement of that organ of his anatomy suggested that he proposed carrying home about as much inside of him as might be imposed upon his back—of this sagacity he seemed conscious, and very proud, and when the sacks of cane were put over his back, pannier fashion, he pursued the path homeward with prouder air and nobler mien than that which marked his course to the cane-brake.

When we three were fully equipped for starting back to the deserted village, Yankee, as already described, and I with a sack of cane thrown over my right shoulder and reaching nearly to my heels, and Telitha in apparel and equipment an exact duplicate of myself, I was so overcome by the ludicrous features of the scene that for the time I lost sight of the pathetic and yielded to inordinate laughter. As memory, electrical and veracious, recapitulated the

facts and circumstances leading to this state of affairs, I realized that there was but one alternative—to laugh or to cry—but the revolutionary blood coursing through my veins decided in favor of the former, and I laughed until I could no longer stand erect, even though braced by an inflexible bag of cane, and I ignominiously toppled over. As I lay upon the ground I laughed, not merrily but grimly, as I fancy a hyena would laugh. The more I sought the sympathy of Telitha in this hilarious ebullition, the more uncontrollable it became. Her utter want of appreciation of the fun, and a vague idea that she was in some way implicated, embarrassed her, and, judging from her facial expression, ever varying and often pathetic, wounded her also. In vain did I point to our docile equine, whose tethering line she held. His enlarged proportions and grotesque accoutrements failed to touch a single risible chord, or convey to her utilitarian mind aught that was amusing, and she doubtless wondered what could have so affected me.

In due time we reached Decatur. After passing the Hoyle place, the residence being then deserted, Telitha indicated by signs too intelligible to be misunderstood that she would go home with her sack of stock provender, leading the horse, and then come back for mine, and I could go by a different route and not be known as a participant in the raid upon the canebrake; but I was too proud of my fidelity to the Southern Confederacy to conceal any evidences of it that the necessities of the times called into action,

and I walked through the stricken village with my sack of cane in my arms instead of upon my back; and would have walked as proudly to the sacrificial altar, myself the offering, if by so doing I could have retrieved the fortunes of my people and established for them a government among the nations of earth.

The lowing of our cow reached me as I entered the court-house square, and I hastened my gait and soon displayed before her, in her stall in the cellar, a tempting repast. And my mother, who possessed the faculty of making something good out of that which was ordinary, displayed one equally tempting to me and Telitha—milk and mush, supplemented by coffee made of parched okra seed.

"Tired nature's sweet restorer" faithfully performed its recuperative service that night. When I opened my eyes upon the glorious light of another day, I was so free from the usual attendants upon fatigue that I involuntarily felt for my body—it seemed to have passed away during the night, and left no trace of former existence. I found it, though, perfectly intact, and ready to obey the behests of my will and serve me through the requirements of another day. And my mother seemed to be in her usual health and willing for me to do anything I thought I ought to do. She could not close her eyes to the fact that our store of supplies was nearly exhausted, and that there was only one way to replenish it; and she had the wisdom and the Christian grace to acquiesce to

the inevitable without a discouraging word. Telitha, upon whose benighted mind the ridiculous phases of the previous day's adventures had dawned sometime in the interim, laughed as soon as she saw me, and in well acted pantomime made me fully aware that she enjoyed at this late hour the ludicrous scene that had so amused me. And Yankee evidently smiled when he saw me, and greeted me with a joyous little whicker that spoke volumes.

A good breakfast for women and beast having been disposed of, I wended my way in quest of Uncle Mack. He alone understood the complicated process of harnessing Yankee in ropes to the primitive vehicle manufactured by his own ingenious hands, and to him I always went when this important task had to be performed. On this occasion, as upon others, it was soon executed. When all was ready and the unbidden tears dashed away, as if out of place, I seized the ropes and started. Where? Ah, that was the question. There was only one place that offered hope of remuneration for the perilous undertaking, and forty miles had to be traversed before reaching it. Forty miles through a devastated country. Forty miles amid untold dangers. But in all the walks of life it has been demonstrated that pluck and energy, and a firm reliance upon Providence, are necessary to surmount difficulties, and of all these essentials I had a goodly share, and never doubted but that I would be taken care of, and my wants and those of others supplied. "God helps those who help themselves," is

an adage which deserves to be emblazoned upon every tree, and imprinted upon every heart. That vain presumption that folds the hands, and prays for benefits and objects desired, without putting forth any effort to obtain them, ought to be rebuked by all good men and women as a machination of Satan.

These and similar reflections nerved me for the task before me, and I started in earnest. When I got to "the blacksmith shop," I looked back and saw my mother standing just where I left her, following me with her eyes. I looked back no more lest I dissolve in tears. As I passed the few abodes that were tenanted, my mission "out" was apprehended, and I was besought in tearful tones to bring back with me all I could, by those who told me that they and their children were upon the verge of starvation. I took all the sacks which were handed to me and rolled them together, and by the aid of a string secured them to the cart, and amidst blessings and good wishes pursued my devious way; for, be it remembered, many obstructions, such as breast-works and thorny hedge-wood, presented formidable barriers to rapid travel for a considerable distance from Decatur.

While leisurely walking beside Yankee, I was struck with the agility of his motion and his improved figure since we traveled over these grounds a few weeks before. He had taken on a degree of symmetry that I never supposed attainable by the poor, emaciated animal which I captured in the canebrake. His hair had become soft and silky, and in the sun-

light displayed artistic shades of coloring from light to deepest brown; and his long, black tail, which hung limp and perpendicular, now affected a curve which even Hogarth might have admired, and his luxuriant and glossy mane waved prettily as a maiden's tresses. And his face, perfect in every lineament, and devoid of any indication of acerbity, lighted by large, liquid, brown eyes, would have been a fit model—a thing of beauty—for the pencil of Rosa Bonheur. Rubbing my hand over his silky coat and enlarged muscles, I decided to enjoy the benefit of his increased strength and gently ordered a halt. Stepping from the ground to the hub of the wheel, another step landed me into the cart, vehicle, wagon or landau, whichever you see proper to denominate it; I do not propose to confine myself to any one of these terms.

Yankee understood the movement, and doubtless felt complimented. As soon as I took my seat in the chair—a concomitant part of the equipage—he started off at a brisk gait, which, without a word of command, he kept up until we came to the base of a long hill, and then he slackened his speed and leisurely walked to the summit. I enjoyed going over ground without muscular effort of my own, and determined to remain in the cart until he showed some sign of fatigue. I had only to hold the ropes and speak an encouraging word, and we traveled on right merrily. Ah, no! That was a misnomer. Callous indeed would have been the heart who could have gone merrily over that devastated, impoverished

land. Sherman, with his destructive hosts, had been there, and nothing remained within the conquered boundary upon which "Sheridan's Crow" could have subsisted. Nothing was left but standing chimneys, and an occasional house, to which one would have supposed a battering ram had been applied. I looked up and down, and in every direction, and saw nothing but destruction, and the gaunt and malignant figure of General Starvation striding over our beautiful country, as if he possessed it. I shook my head defiantly at him and went on, musing upon these things. I never questioned the wisdom or goodness of God in permitting them, but I pondered upon them, and have never yet reached their unfathomable depths.

At the end of the first day's journey, I found myself twenty miles, or more, from the starting point, and tenderly cared for by a good family, consisting, in these war times, only of a mother and several precious little children, who were too glad to have company to consider my appeal for a night's entertainment intrusive. This desolate mother and children thought they had seen all the horror of warfare illustrated by the premeditated cruelty of the Yankee raiders, and could not conceive how it could have been worse. But when I got through with my recital of injuries, they were willing that theirs should remain untold. A delicious supper, like manna from Heaven, was enjoyed with a zest unknown to those who have never been hungry.

The light of another day found us all up in that hospitable household, and an appetizing breakfast fortified me for another day's labor in any field in which I might be called to perform it. The little boys who had taken Yankee out of the rope harness the evening before, remembered its intricacies and had no difficulty in getting him back into that complicated gear. When all was ready, and grateful good-byes had been uttered, I again mounted "the hub" and got into the vehicle. After I had taken my seat, the good lady handed me a package, which proved to be a nice lunch for my dinner. She also had a sack of potatoes and a pumpkin stored away in the landau; and being a merciful woman, she thought of the horse, and gave some home-cured hay for his noon day meal.

All day I followed in the track of Sherman's minions, and found the destruction greater than when I had passed in this direction before. Coming to a hill, the long ascent of which would be fatiguing to Yankee, I ordered a halt and got out of the wagon. Taking position by his side we climbed the hill together, and then we went down it together, and continued to journey side by side, I oblivious to everything but the destruction, either complete or partial, on every side. At length we came to a lovely wee bit stream of water, exulting in its consciousness that no enemy could arrest it in its course to the sea, or mar its beauty as it rippled onward. We halted, and I loosened the ropes so that Yankee might partake

of the flowing water before eating his noon day meal. And I am sure epicure never enjoyed luncheon at Delmonico's with more zest than I did the frugal meal prepared for me by the friendly hand of that dear Confederate woman. Much as I enjoyed it, I finished my dinner some time before Yankee did his, and employed the interim in laving my hands and face in the pure water, and contemplating myself in the perfect mirror formed by its surface. Not as Narcissus, did I enjoy this pastime, but as one startled by the revelation. Traces of care, of sorrow, of apprehension for the future, were indelibly imprinted upon forehead and cheek, and most of all upon that most tell-tale of all features, the mouth. I wept at the change, and by way of diversion turned from the unsatisfactory contemplation of myself to that of Yankee. This horse, instinct with intelligence, appreciated every act of kindness, and often expressed his gratitude in ways so human-like as to startle and almost affright me. I am sure I have seen his face lighted by a smile, and radiant with gratitude. And no human being ever expressed more forcibly by word or act his sorrow at being unable to do all that was desired of him in emergency, than did this dumb brute when he gave me that long, earnest, pathetic look (mentioned in a former sketch) when, from sheer exhaustion, he lay down near the heap of ashes where once stood the beautiful residence of my friend of honored memory, Rev. Henry Clark.

The more I contrasted the treatment which I in

common with my country women and my country, had received at the hands of the Yankees, (the then exponent of the sentiment of the United States toward the Southern people) and the gentle, friendly demeanor of the animal upon whom I had unthoughtedly bestowed a name constantly suggestive of an enemy, the more dissatisfied I became with it, and I determined then and there to change it. Suiting the action to the decision, I gathered the ropes and led the noble steed to the brink of that beautiful little brooklet, and—paused for a name. What should it be? "Democrat?" I believed him to be a democrat, true and tried, and yet I did not much like the name. Had not the Northern Democrats allowed themselves to be allured into abolition ranks, and made to do the fighting, while the abolitionists, under another name, devastated the country and enriched themselves by the booty. "Copperhead?" I did not like that much. It had a metallic ring that grated harshly upon my nerves, and I was not then aware of their great service to the South in restraining and keeping subordinate to humanity, as far as in them lay, the hatred and evil passions of the abolitionists. "Johnny Reb?" Ah, I had touched the key-note at last, and it awakened a responsive chord that vibrated throughout my very being. I had had a secret belief, more than once expressed in words, that my noble equine was a captured rebel "held in durance vile" until bereft of health and strength, then abandoned to die upon the commons. "Johnny Reb!" I no longer

hesitated. The name was electrical, and the chord with which it came in contact was charged to its utmost capacity. With the placid waters of that ever-flowing stream, in the name of the Southern Confederacy, I christened one of the best friends I ever had "Johnny Reb," a name ever dear to me.

This ceremony having been performed to my satisfaction and to his, too—judging by the complaisant glances, and, as I fancied, by the suggestion of an approving smile which he bestowed upon me—I mounted the hub, stepped into the cart, seated myself, and with ropes in hand continued my way to "The Circle," and arrived there before night. Not being tired, I immediately struck out among the vendors of home-made products—edibles, wearing apparel, etc.—for the purpose of purchasing a wagon load to carry to Decatur, not for the ignoble purpose of speculation, but to bestow, without money and without price, upon those who, like my mother and myself, preferred hunger and privation rather than give up our last earthly home to the destroying fiend that stalked over our land protected by Federal bayonets.

Before the shades of night came on I had accomplished my object. As a matter of history, I will enumerate some of the articles purchased, and annex the prices paid for them in Confederate money:

One bushel of meal	$10 00
Four bushels of corn	40 00
Fifteen pounds of flour	7 50

Four pounds dried apples	$ 5 00
One and a half pounds butter	6 00
A bushel of sweet potatoes	6 00
Three gallons of syrup	15 00
Shoeing the horse	25 00
For spending the night at Mrs. Born's, self and horse	10 00

Not knowing the capabilities of "Johnny Reb," I feared to add one hundred and thirty-six pounds avoirdupois weight, to a cart already loaded to repletion, and the next morning on starting took my old familiar place by his side. To my slightest touch or word of encouragement, he gave me an appreciative look, and obeyed to the letter my wishes with regard to his gaits—slow or fast in adaptation to mine. In due time we again rested on the banks of the beautiful little stream hallowed by the memory of repudiating a name, rendered by the vandalism of its legitimate owners too obnoxious to be borne by a noble horse, and by the bestowing upon him of another more in keeping with his respect for ladies and other fine traits of character which he possessed. Neither he nor I had a lunch with which to regale ourselves; and whilst he moved about at will, cropping little tufts of wild growth and tender leaves, which instinct taught him were good for his species, I abandoned myself to my favorite pursuit—the contemplation of nature. Like Aurora Leigh, I "found books among the hills and vales, and running brooks," and held

communion with their varied forms and invisible influences. To me they ever spoke of the incomprehensible wisdom and goodness of God. My heart, from my earliest recollection, always went out in adoration to Him who could make alike the grand old Titans of the forest and the humblest blade of grass; and now I beheld them under circumstances peculiarly calculated to evoke admiration. Change had come to everything else. The lofty trees stood in silent grandeur, undisturbed by the ememy's step or the harsh clarion of war—as if defiant of danger—and gave shelter and repose to the humblest of God's creatures who sought their protecting arms. Beguiled by the loveliness of the woodland scenery, I often found myself stopping to dageurreotype it upon the tablets of my memory, and to feast my senses upon the aromatic perfume of wildwood autumn flowers. "Strong words of counseling" I found in them, and in "the vocal pines and waters," and out of these books I learned "the ignorance of men."

> "And how God laughs in Heaven when any man
> Says, 'Here I'm learned; this I understand;
> In that I am never caught at fault, or in doubt.'"

A word of friendly greeting and renewed thanks to mine hostess of two nights before, and her dear little children, detained me only a very short and unbegrudged space of time; and during that time I did not forget to refer to the potatoes and the pumpkin so kindly given to me by them on my down trip, and

which I could have left in their care until my return, had I thought of it.

Night again came on, and this time found me picking my way as best I could over the rocks shadowed by Stone Mountain. On I plodded through the darkness, guided rather by the unerring step of Johnny Reb than any knowledge I had of the way. At length the poor faithful animal and myself were rewarded for perseverance by seeing glimmering lights of the mountain village. We struck a bee line for the nearest one, and were soon directed to "a boarding house." I was too glad to get into it then, to descant upon its demerits now. I assured the landlady that I needed no supper myself, and would pay her what she would charge for both if she would see that the horse was well fed. I think she did so. My valuable freight could not remain in the cart all night, and there was no one to bring it in. In vain did she assure me that I would find it all right if I left it there. I got into the cart and lifted the sacks and other things out of it myself, and, by the help of the aforesaid person, got everything into the house. I fain would have lain down by these treasures, for they had increased in value beyond computation since leaving Social Circle, and would have done so but for repeated assurances of their safety.

An early start next morning gave me the privilege of going over the ground familiar to my youth in the loveliest part of the day, and when the sun looked at me over the mountain's crest I felt as if I was in the

presence of a veritable king, and wanted to take my bonnet off and make obeisance to him. His beneficent rays fell alike upon the just and the unjust, and lighted the pathway of the destroyer as brightly as that of the benefactor. Amid destruction, wanton and complete, and over which angels might weep, I stepped the distance off between Stone Mountain and Judge Bryce's; not a living thing upon the face of the earth, nor a sound of any kind greeting me—the desolation of war reigned supreme. I again stopped at Judge Bryce's, and implored his protection to Decatur, but, as on the former occasion, he was afraid to leave his wife to the tender mercy (?) of the enemy. He told me he feared I would not reach home with my cart of edibles, as "Yankee raiders had been coming out from Atlanta every day lately," and that the set that was now coming was more vindictive than any that had preceded it. Good, dear Mrs. Bryce, trusting in the Lord for future supplies, took a little from her scanty store of provisions and added it to mine for her friend, my mother.

With many forebodings of evil, I took up the line of march to Decatur. I looked almost with regret upon my pretty horse. Had he remained the poor ugly animal that was lassoed in the cane-brake, I would have had but little fear of losing him, but under my fostering care, having become pretty plump and sprightly, I had but little hope of keeping him. Being absorbed by these mournful reflections and not having the ever-watchful Telitha with me to announce

danger from afar, I was brought to a full realization of its proximity by what appeared to be almost an army of *blue-coats*, dashing up on spirited horses, and for the purpose of humiliating me, hurrahing "for Jefferson Davis and the Southern Confederacy." As a flag of truce, I frantically waved my bonnet, which act was misapprehended and taken as a signal of approval of their "hurrah for Jefferson Davis and the Southern Confederacy," which was resounding without intermission.

Seeing several very quiet, dignified looking gentlemen, who, although apart from the others, seemed to be exercising a restraining influence, I approached them and told them how I had gone out from Decatur unprotected and all alone to get provisions to keep starvation from among our defenseless women and children, and that I had to go all the way to Social Circle before I could get anything, and that I had walked back in order to save the horse as much as possible. These men, however, although seemingly interested, questioned and cross-questioned me until I had but little hope of their protection. One of them said, "I see you have one of our horses. How did you come by him?" And then the story of how I came by him was recapitulated without exaggeration or diminuation. This narrative elicited renewed hurrahs for Jefferson Davis and the Southern Confederacy. A few minutes private conversation between these gentlemen ensued, and all of them approached me, and the spokesman said, "Two of us

will escort you to Decatur, and see that no harm befall you." It seemed, then, that no greater boon could have been offered under the canopy of Heaven, and I am sure no woman could have experienced more gratitude or been more profuse in its expression.

The sight of my nervous, greyhaired mother, and her pretty mother ways, touched another tender chord in the hearts of these gentlemen, and if constraint existed it was dispelled, and they became genial and very like friends before they left. They even promised to send us some oats for noble Johnny Reb, who displayed the greatest equanimity all through these trying scenes.

CHAPTER XVI.

NEWS FROM THE ABSENT BROTHER.

He marches into Tennessee with Hood—Extracts from his letters written on the way—Two ears of parched corn—The night burial of a soldier.

AFTER the majority of these sketches were written, I was permitted by my sister to take a few extracts from the cherished letters of our brother, which she numbered and carefully laid away as her most precious treasure. To these we are indebted for all that we know of his history during the trying days and weeks of which I have just been writing. Where was he, and how did he fare? Few and far between were the letters now, in these dark days of the war. The soldiers themselves had but little opportunity to write, and the mail facilities were poor. But I feel sure that to the survivors of the "Lost Cause," these meager scraps concerning that brave but disastrous march into Tennessee will be read with melancholy interest:

"On the line of Alabama and Georgia,
Near Alpine, Ga., 8 o'clock at night, Oct. 17, 1864.

MY DEAR SISTER: As there is a probability of the mail courier leaving here early in the morning,

I hastily scratch you a few lines that you may know that under the blessings of a kind providence I am yet alive, and, though somewhat wearied, enjoying good health. Yours of 28th of September has been received, but under circumstances of hard marches, etc., there has been but one opportunity of writing to you since leaving Palmetto, and then had just finished one to Texas, and was fixing to write to you, when the order came to 'fall in.'

"Well, leaving camps near Palmetto on the 29th of September, we crossed the Chattahoochee below, marched up to Powder Springs, threatened Marietta, and at the same time throwing Stewart's corps around above Big Shanty to cut the railroad, which was torn up for about thirteen miles, French's Division attacking Alatoona, where he sustained some loss, having works to charge. Ector's Texas Brigade, and some Missourians, carried their part of the works; but A——'s Brigade failed to do their part, hence the advantage gained was lost. By this time the enemy were concentrating at Marietta, and General Hood's object being accomplished, he then marched rapidly towards Rome, flanking the place, and making a heavy demonstration as if he intended crossing the river and attacking the place. The enemy then commenced a concentration at Kingston and Rome. We then moved around Rome and marched rapidly up the Oostanaula, and on the evening of the 11th inst., sent a division of infantry with some cavalry across the river, and captured Calhoun with some stores.

Moved on the next morning by a forced march, flanking Resaca, and striking the railroad immediately above, tearing it up to Tilton, where there were about three hundred Yankees in a block house. A surrender was demanded. A reply was returned: 'If you want us, come and take us.' Our artillery was soon in position, and a few shots soon made them show the 'white rag.' We tore up the road that night, and the next morning by nine o'clock, to Tunnel Hill, burning every cross-tie and twisting the bars. Dalton surrendered without a fight, with a full garrison of negroes and some white Yankees. The block house above, at a bridge, refused to surrender, and we had to bring the artillery into requisition again, which made them succumb. They all seemed to be taken by surprise and were hard to convince that it was a cavalry raid. They evacuated Tunnel Hill. Thus after five months of fighting and running, the army of Tennessee re-occupied Dalton. Sherman has been taken by surprise. He never dreamed of such a move. General Hood's plans all being carried out, so far as the State road was concerned, we marched across the mountains to LaFayette, in the vicinity of which we camped last night, and have marched twenty-three miles to-day. To-morrow we cross the Lookout Mountain, and will, I suppose, make directly for the Tennessee river, though of this I'm not certain. Hood has shown himself a general in strategy, and has secured the confidence of the troops.

Wherever we go, may God's blessing attend us. Pray for me. In haste.

Your affectionate brother,

TOM STOKES."

P. S.—CHEROKEE CO., ALA., Oct. 18, 1864.

The courier not leaving this morning, I have a little more time left. We did not travel so far to-day as I heard we would, having come only ten miles, and have stopped to rest the balance of the evening. I find you dislike to have your communications cut off, so I see you are below Madison. Would to Heaven that, in one sense of the word, my communication was cut off forever; yea, that every channel leading me in contact with *the world*, in any other character than as a minister of "the meek and lowly Saviour," was to me forever blocked up. I am tired of confusion and disorder—tired of living a life of continual excitement. * * * You spoke of passing through a dark cloud. "There is nothing true but Heaven," and it is to that rest for the weary, alone, to which we are to look for perfect enjoyment. We are to walk by faith, and though the clouds of trouble thicken, yet we should know that if we do our duty we shall see and feel the genial sunshine of a happier clime. Yes, my sister, though we knew our lives should be lengthened one hundred years, and every day should be full of trouble; yet if we have a hope of Heaven, that hope should buoy up the soul to be cheerful even under earth's saddest calamities.

I think we will cross the Tennessee river and make for Tennessee, where it seems to be understood that we will have large accessions to our army both there and from Kentucky. * * *."

The next letter is enclosed in an envelope which came through no post-office, as it was furnished by my sister, and upon it she wrote: "This letter was sent to me on the 27th of November, by some one who picked it up upon the street in Madison. The post-office had been rifled by the federals who (under command of Slocum) passed through Madison, November 18th and 19th. Though found without an envelope, and much stained, it has reached me, because signed with his full name."

This letter is dated "Near Decatur, Ala., October 28th, 1864." We give a few items:

"We invested this place yesterday, and there has been some skirmishing and artillery firing until an hour ago, when it seems to have measurably ceased. We are in line of battle southwest of Decatur, about one and a quarter miles. I went out reconnoitering this morning, and saw the enemy's position. They have a large fort immediately in the town, with the 'stars and stripes' waving above. I hear occasional distant artillery firing which I suppose is Forrest, near Huntsville. * * * We were several days crossing Sand Mountain. Have had delightful weather until a day or two ago it rained, making the roads very muddy, in consequence of which we have been on small rations, the supply trains failing to get up.

We had only half rations yesterday, and have had none to-day (now nearly three o'clock) but will get some to-night. We try to be cheerful. * * * No letter from Texas yet. Not one of our company has had any intelligence from Johnson county since last May. I can't see what's the matter. I have been absent nearly one year, and have received but one letter." (Of course the dear loved ones in Texas wrote to their soldier braves on this side the Mississippi river; but such are the misfortunes of war that these missives were long delayed in their passage.)

"Saturday, October 29th.—The condition of affairs this morning at sunrise remains, so far as I know, unchanged. * * * Yesterday evening we drew two ears of corn for a day's rations; so parched corn was all we had yesterday; but we will get plenty to-day."

And now we come to the last of the letters ever received. It is probable it was among the last he ever wrote. It is dated "Tuscumbia, Ala., Nov. 10, 1864. * * * "We arrived at this place the 31st of October, and have been here since, though what we are waiting for I can't tell. The pontoons are across the river, and one corps on the other side at Florence. We have had orders to be ready to move several times, but were countermanded. We were to have moved to-day, and even our wagons started off, but for some cause or other we have not gone. The river is rising very rapidly which may endanger the pontoons.

November 12th.—I thought to send this off yesterday morning, but on account of the rain a few days ago, the mail carrier was delayed until last night which brought your dear letter of date Oct. 31st. It was handed me on my return from the graveyard, where I had been to perform the funeral ceremony of a member of the 6th Texas, who was killed yesterday morning by the fall of a tree. He had been in every battle in which this brigade was ever engaged; an interesting young man, only nineteen years of age.

The scene at the graveyard was a solemn one, being some time in the night before we arrived. The cold, pale moon shone down upon us, and the deep stillness which pervaded the whole scene, with the rough, uncouth, though tender-hearted soldiers with uncovered heads forming a large circle around the grave, made it, indeed, a scene solemnly impressive. The print of my Bible being small, I could not read, but recited from memory a few passages of Scripture suitable to the occasion, the one upon which I dwelt chiefly being a declaration of Paul to the Corinthians, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." I then spoke of the certainty of that change from life to death; that with the soldier, even, death is not confined to the battle field; spoke of our comrade, who but in the morning bade as fair for long life as any of us, but within the space of a few short hours was lying in the cold embrace of death; of another of our brigade who was instantly killed a short time since by a stroke of lightning;

closed with an exhortation to all to live nearer to God, and be prepared at all times to meet their God in peace. Oh, how sad! Far away from his home to be buried in a land of strangers. How the hearts of his father, mother, and sisters must bleed when they receive the sad tidings.

I expect we will leave here for Middle Tennessee next Monday, as the river will be falling by that time. There is much talk of this brigade being sent home after this campaign. Major Rankin has been exchanged, and is with us. I gave Lt. Collins's overcoat to his company to take care of for him.

Am so glad to hear from ma and sister. We get no letters from Texas, but are continually sending some over, as all the disabled of the last campaign are being retired and sent across. Poor Uncle James! His Joseph is gone. * * * Write to me often.

Affectionately,

YOUR BROTHER."

Ah, could the history of these brave men be written, what a record it would be of endurance, of daring, of heroism, of sacrifice! And the heart-breaking pathos of the last chapters of their experience, ere the furling of the flag they followed! Pat Cleburne and his fallen braves—

> "On fame's eternal camping ground,
> Their silent tents are spread.
> And glory marks with solemn round
> The bivouac of the dead."

CHAPTER XVII.

AN INCIDENT OF THE WAR.

Related to the writer by Hon. Roger Q. Mills, of Texas.

THE night was black as Erebus. Not a scintillant of light from moon or star penetrated the dense forest, and no eye save that of God discerned the dangers of the situation. Hill and dale, mountain and precipice, creek and surging stream, presented barriers that none but men inured to hardship, and unknown to fear, would have attempted to surmount.

Obedient to the command of the superior officer, the remnant of that magnificent and intrepid army, once guided by the unerring wisdom of Joseph E. Johnston, plodded their way uncomplainingly over these trying difficulties. The Lord must have been amazed at their temerity, and shook the very earth in rebuke, and ever and anon by the lightning's flash revealed glimpses of the peril to which they were exposed; and yet in unbroken line they groped their way, not knowing whither. At length bewildered, and made aware of impending danger, the general in command ordered a halt. The martial tread ceased, and all was still as death. In the midst of this stillness a voice, sweet as that of a woman, was heard re-

peating that grand old hymn, which has given comfort to many weary ones treading the wine press:

"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said,
You who unto Jesus for refuge have fled.

"In every condition, in sickness, in health,
In poverty's vale, or abounding in wealth,
At home and abroad, on the land, on the sea,
As thy days may demand shall thy strength ever be.

"Fear not, I am with thee, O! be not dismayed,
I, I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen thee, help thee and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.

"When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of woe shall not thee overflow;
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

"When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace all sufficient shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

"E'en down to old age, all My people shall prove
My sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love;
And when hoary hairs shall their temples adorn,
Like lambs they shall still in My bosom be borne.

"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to His foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake."

General Mills said that during the rendition of this beautiful hymn, not even the breaking of a twig, or the changing of a footstep broke the silence of the

midnight tranquility. The rain drops ceased to fall; the electricity darted harmlessly through the tree tops; and the muttering of the thunder lulled.

After a most impressive silence of several minutes, the same voice which had rendered the hymn so effectively repeated from memory an appropriate passage of Scripture and proceeded to expatiate upon it. He had not uttered a dozen words before another flash of lightning revealed the upturned heads and listening attitudes of the men composing that weird congregation, and each one of them knew as if by instinct that he was going to hear something that would help him on his journey to the Land of Beulah. Strong in the faith, he carried many of the truths and promises of the Holy Word within his mind, and now, as many times before, he opened them by the magic key of memory and unfolded to view their unsearchable riches. He begged his fellow-men and comrades in arms to accept them without money and without price —to accept them that they might wear kingly robes and royal diadems, and be with Jesus in His Father's regal mansions throughout the grand eternities. And as he told the old, old story of divine love, it assumed a contemporaneous interest and seemed a living present reality. Every man who heard it felt the living force and energizing influence of the theme. And thus by earnest aggressive appeals, he exerted a wonderful power for good over the minds of his hearers; and those men, even now with phantom hands pointing gaunt fingers at them, by their deep interest testi-

fied to the warm suffusing purpose which made itself felt in every word that he uttered, as he told of the Fatherhood of God and the ever-present sympathy of a benignant and infinite parent, who delighteth not in the death of sinners, but rather that all should come to Him and have eternal life.

General Mills added that, as the fine resonant voice of the speaker penetrated the dense forest and found its way to his hearers in distinct enunciation of well-chosen words, the deep-toned thunder emphasized the impressive points, and made it a scene which for grandeur and sublimity has never been surpassed, while the vivid flashes of lightning revealed again and again the earnest face and solemn mien of my brother, Lieutenant Thomas J. Stokes, of the Tenth Texas Infantry of Cleburne's Division.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Picking up minnie balls around Atlanta—Exchanging them for bread.

AFTER mingling renewed vows of allegiance to our cause, and expressions of a willing submission to the consequences of defeat—privations and evil dire, if need be—with my morning orisons; yet I could not be oblivious to the fact that I was hungry, very hungry. And there was another, whose footsteps were becoming more and more feeble day by day, and whose voice, when heard at all, was full of the pathos of despair, who needed nourishment that could not be obtained, and consolation which it seemed a mockery to offer.

In vain did I look round for relief. There was nothing left in the country to eat. Yea, a crow flying over it would have failed to discover a morsel with which to appease its hunger; for a Sheridan by another name had been there with his minions of destruction, and had ruthlessly destroyed every vestige of food and every means of support. Every larder was empty, and those with thousands and tens of thousands of dollars, were as poor as the poorest, and as hungry too. Packing trunks, in every house to which refugees had returned, contained large amounts

of Confederate money. We had invested all we possessed, except our home, and land and negroes, in Confederate bonds, and these were now inefficient for purchasing purposes. Gold and silver we had none. A more favored few had a little of those desirable mediums of purchase, and sent a great distance for supplies; but they offered no relief to those who had stayed at home and borne the brunt of battle, and saved their property from the destroyers' touch.

What was I to do? Sit down and wait for the inevitable starvation? No; I was not made of such stuff. I had heard that there had been a provision store opened in Atlanta for the purpose of bartering provisions for munitions of war—anything that could be utilized in warfare. Minnie balls were particularly desirable. I therefore took Telitha by the apron, and had a little talk with her, and when I was through she understood that something was up that would bring relief to certain organs that had become quite troublesome in their demands, and she was anxious to take part in the performance, whatever that might be. I went also to my mother, and imparted to her my plans of operation, and she took that pathetic little backward step peculiar to herself on occasions which tried her soul, and with quivering lip she assented in approving, though almost inaudible words.

With a basket in either hand, and accompanied by Telitha, who carried one that would hold about a peck, and two old dull case knives, I started to the battle

fields around Atlanta to pick up the former missiles of death to exchange for food to keep us from starving.

It was a cold day. The wind was very sharp, and over the ground denuded of forest trees and undergrowth, the wind was blowing a miniature gale. Our wraps were inadequate, and how chilled we became in that rude November blast! Mark you it was the 30th of November, 1864. But the colder we were, the faster we walked, and in an incredibly short time we were upon the battle field, searching for lead.

I made it a point to keep very near the road in the direction of Atlanta, and soon found myself on the very spot where the Confederate magazine stood, the blowing up of which, by Confederate orders, shook the very earth, and was distinctly heard thirty-five or forty miles distant. An exclamation of glad surprise from Telitha carried me to her. She had found a bonanza, and was rapidly filling her basket with that which was more valuable to us than gold. In a marshy place, encrusted with ice, innumerable bullets, minnie balls, and pieces of lead seemed to have been left by the irony of fate to supply sustenance to hungry ones, and employment to the poor, as all the winter those without money to send to more favored and distant points found sure returns from this lead mine. It was so cold! our feet were almost frozen, and our hands had commenced to bleed, and handling cold rough lead cramped them so badly that I feared we would have to desist from our work before filling the baskets.

Lead! Blood! Tears! Oh how suggestive! Lead, blood, and tears, mingled and commingled. In vain did I try to dash the tears away. They would assert themselves and fall upon lead stained with blood. "God of mercy, if this be Thy holy will, give me fortitude to bear it uncomplainingly," was the heart-felt invocation that went up to the throne of grace from over lead, blood, and tears, that fearful day. For relief, tears did not suffice. I wanted to cry aloud; nature would not be satisfied with less, and I cried like a baby, long and loud. Telitha caught the spirit of grief, and cried too. This ebullition of feeling on her part brought me to a realization of my duty to her, as well as to my poor patient mother to whom the day must seem very long, and I tried to stifle my sobs and lamentations. I wondered if she had the forebodings of coming bereavement that were lacerating my own heart. I did not doubt but that she had, and I cried in sympathy for her.

At length our baskets were filled, and we took up our line of march to the desolated city. There were no labarynths to thread, nor streets to follow, and an occasional question secured information that enabled us to find the "commissary" without delay. Telitha was very ambitious that I should appear a lady, and wanted me to deposit my load of lead behind some place of concealment, while we went on to deliver hers, and then let her go back for mine. But I was too much a Confederate soldier for that, and walked bravely in with my heavy precious load.

A courteous gentleman, in a faded grey uniform, evidently discharged because of wounds received in battle, approached and asked what he could do for me. "I have heard that you give provisions for lead," I replied, "and I have brought some to exchange." What seemed an interminable silence ensued, and I felt, without seeing, that I was undergoing a sympathetic scrutiny, and that I was recognized as a lady "to the manor born."

"What would you like in exchange," he asked. "If you have sugar, and coffee, and meal, a little of each if you please," I timidly said. "I left nothing to eat at home."

The baskets of lead were removed to the rear and weighed, and in due time returned to me filled to the brim with sugar, coffee, flour, meal, lard, and the nicest meat I had seen in a long time.

"O, sir," I said, "I did not expect so much."

"You have not yet received what is due you," this good man replied, and handed me a certificate which he assured me would secure as much more on presentation.

Joy had gone out of my life, and I felt no thrill of that kind; but I can never describe the satisfaction I experienced as I lifted two of those baskets, and saw Telitha grasp the other one, and turned my face homeward.

CHAPTER XIX.

The Decatur women's struggle for bread—Sweet singing in hard places—Pleasant visitors—I make a trip to Alabama—The news of my brother's death.

THE tug of war was upon us from the mountains to the sea-board, and ingenious was the woman who devised means to keep the wolf, hungry and ravenous, from the door. The depreciation of our currency, and its constant diminution in value, had rendered it an unreliable purchasing commodity, and we had nothing to give in exchange for food. I, therefore, felt that I had literally rubbed against Aladdin's lamp when I saw much needed food, good and palatable, given in exchange for minnie balls, and for any kind of metal convertible into destructive missiles, and I was anxious that others should share the benefit accruing from the lead mine mentioned in a former sketch. In pursuance of this humane desire, I proclaimed its discovery and results from house to house; for, mark you, we had no "Daily Courier," nor messenger boy to convey the glad tidings to the half-famished women and children in and around Decatur. And if my words could have been changed into diamonds by the magic wand of a fairy, not one of those starving people would have accepted the change of diamonds for bread.

It required only a short time to raise a large company of women, girls and little boys, who were ready to do service for themselves and their country by digging lead with case knives from mines providentially furnished them. And was it not serving the cause of the Confederacy? I thought so; and never walked with more independent step than when acting as generalissimo of that band of devoted, patriotic women, en route to the "lead mines" around Atlanta. Telitha, too, evidently felt that she was an important adjunct in the mining enterprise, and a conspicuous personage in the scenes being enacted, and emphasized her opinion by strong and suggestive gesticulation. On this occasion she playfully wrenched from my hand the small vessel with which I had supplied myself and which I carried on the former trip, and substituted a larger one, while for herself she got at least a half bushel measure.

All who remember the month of December, 1864, know that it abounded in clouds and rain and sleet, and was intensely cold in the Confederate States of America; and in the latitude embracing Atlanta such severity of weather had never been known to the oldest inhabitant. But what mattered it? Each one in that little band of women was connected by a bright link to the illustrious armies that were enduring greater privation and hardship than those to which she was exposed, and counted it a willing oblation upon his country's altar, and why should she not prove

faithful to the end, and suffer the pangs of hunger and privation too?

The work of picking up minnie balls began as soon as we reached the battlefield, and, consequently, we carried several pounds some distance unnecessarily. The "mine" proper, I doubt not, could have filled several wagons. As "a little fun now and then is relished by the wisest men," I found a grim smile asserting itself at the quaint and ready wit of those estimable girls, the Misses Morton, whose Christian names I have forgotten, and who, alas! have long since joined the silent majority. One of them assumed the character of a Confederate soldier and the other that of a Federal, and the conversation carried on between them, as they "exchanged coffee and tobacco," was rich, rare and racy. The exchange having been effected, the signal of combat was given. "Look out, Billy Yank!" "Look out Johnnie Reb!" were simultaneous warnings from opposing forces, and minnie balls whized through the air, much to the merriment of the little boys who wished themselves men, that they might be with their fathers, whizing minnie balls from musket mouths.

The sham battle over, the work of digging lead was resumed, and in an amazingly short time our vessels were filled to overflowing. I watched Telitha with interest. She was eager to fill her basket, and more than once she said, "Me full!" and added a little guttural laugh that always indicated pleasure. Her attempt to raise the basket from the ground, and her

utter failure to do so, surprised her amazingly, and her disappointment was pathetic. With great reluctance she saw her treasure reduced to her capacity of handling. Each member of the party experienced similar disappointment on attempting to raise her burden, and we left more exhumed lead and other valuables than we carried away.

We took up our line of march, and as there were no obstructions in the way, (for, be it remembered, Sherman had been there, and with torch and explosive removed all obstructions save the standing chimneys and carcasses of horses and cattle shot by his order to prevent the possibility of use to the rebels) we struck a bee-line to the commissary. As the first to take advantage of this industry, I took the lead, and the vigor of young womanhood, and "a heart for every fate," gave elasticity to my steps, and I soon outdistanced even the girls. In due time we reached the commissary, and in a short while a most satisfactory exchange was made, thanks to one whose great heart beat in unison with ours, and in lieu of the heavy burden which we laid down we picked up food for the nourishment of our tired bodies and those of our loved ones at home. Oh, how light, comparatively, it seemed! I verily believe it it had weighed the same number of pounds, it would have seemed lighter, and the change would have seemed restful. "Good-bye, noble ladies and sisters in a righteous cause," was the parting salutation of our no less noble benefactor.

With our respective packages of food we again turned our faces homeward, solemn as a funeral march, for, strive against them as we would, we all had forebodings of ill, and the swaying of our bodies and our footsteps kept time with the pulsations of our sad hearts. I fancied as I approached standing chimneys and other evidences of destroyed homes, that the spirit of Sherman, in the guise of an evil spirit, was laughing over the destruction his diabolism had wrought. In the midst of these reflections a song, which for sweetness and tranquilizing melody I have seldom heard equalled and never surpassed, broke the stillness of the scene and added to the melancholy interest of the occasion. It was the well known ballad, then familiar to every child in the Confederacy: "When this Cruel War is Over," and sung by those gifted sisters mentioned as a part of the lead digging company. The pure, sweet soprano voice of one of the girls, put to flight the spirit of Sherman, and when it was joined by the flute-like alto of the other, every evil spirit within and without was exorcised, and the spirit of submission took its place. And yet as the words rang out and found an echo in my own heart, I had to walk very straight, and turn my head neither to the right nor to the left, lest I betray the copious tears trickling down my cheeks. At length pent up feeling burst the fetters, and an audible sob removed restraint, and we cried as women burdened with great sorrow. Precious tears! Nature's kind alleviator in time of trouble.

"The day was cold and dark and dreary,
And it rained, and the winds were never weary."

and yet I was nerved for its duties and toil by the conciousness of having met, uncomplainingly, the work which the preservation of my own principles made me willing to endure.

Several days subsequent to this trip to Atlanta, the Morton girls came running in and told me that we had some delightful friends at the "Swanton place," who requested to see us. My mother was too much exhausted by anxiety and waiting for that which never came, to go, but approved my doing so. I, therefore, donned my sun-bonnet and went; and whom should I meet but Mrs. Trenholm and her sweet young daughters, Essie and Lila? I was delighted to see them, and invited them to go home with me. Ma received them in a spirit of cordial hospitality, and they were invited to remain at her house. Without hesitation, Mrs. Trenholm accepted the proffered kindness, and returned to her wayside rendezvous only to send her trunks, bedding and other household goods. And truly the coming of that saintly woman and those lovely girls was a rare benediction, especially at that time. Day by day ma looked in vain for tidings from "the front"—wherever that might be—and day by day her health and strength was perceptibly weakened by disappointment. Mrs. Trenholm's sympathy with her in her suspense regarding the operations of Hood's army, and the fate of her beloved son, was both touching and consoling. Seeing that

my mother and myself were hoping almost against hope, she endeavored to bring us to a realization of that fact, and a complete submission to the will of God, even though that will deprived us of our loved one. All of her christian arguments and consolations had been pondered over and over by mother and daughter, but they never seemed so sweet and potent as when coming in the chaste and simple language of a precious saintly woman.

With the tact peculiar to the refind of every clime and locality, Mrs. Trenholm assumed management of the culinary department, and her dinner pot hung upon our crane several weeks, and daily sent forth appetizing odors of bacon and peas. How we enjoyed those peas and that bacon! and the soup seasoned with the only condiments at our command—salt and red pepper—and the good hoe-cakes! Mrs. Trenholm had a large sack of cow-peas, and a sack of dried fruit, and other articles of food with which she was provided for herself and her family before she left Southwest Georgia enroute to her home in Marietta, which she left in obedience to the order of William Tecumseh Sherman, and which she learned before reaching Decatur, had shared the fate of nearly all other homes which had to be thus abandoned. Although magnanimously proffered, we were averse to sharing Mrs. Trenholm's well-prepared and ofttimes tempting *cuisine*, unless our proportion of food equaled hers: and fearing even the appearance of scanty supplies, I set about to gather up "the miners," so that

we might appoint a day to again go lead digging, if that which we left in as many little heaps as there were members of the company had been in the interim, gathered up by others.

On former occasions I had led my company to victory over that malignant general left by Sherman to complete his work, and, styled by him "General Starvation," and they were willing to go wherever I led. Now I had two recruits of whom I was very proud. Telitha, too, had gathered from observation that the sweet young Trenholm girls were going with us, and she set about to provide very small baskets for their use, which, with gestures amusing and appropriate she made us understand were large enough to contain all the lead that girls so pretty and so lady-like ought to carry. To their credit, however, they repudiated that idea, and carried larger vessels. By appointment the "lead diggers" were to meet at the tan yard, those arriving first to wait until the entire number came. "Man proposes and God disposes." Just as my last glove was drawn on, Telitha, ever on the alert, said "Morton, Morton," and I looked and saw the girls coming. "We needn't go—the commissary has folded its tents, and silently stolen away," was the voluntary announcement. Imagine my consternation and disappointment—the last hope of supply cut off! Ma saw the effect upon me, and said in a more hopeful voice than was her wont, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." And good Mrs. Trenholm said her sack of peas was like the cruse of oil that never

seemed to diminish in quantity, however much was taken out of it. An examination, too, of our own resources was quite gratifying; but I knew I ought to be providing for a rainy day."

I pass now over an interval which brings me to the latter part of January, 1865. My sister returned home from Madison and spent several weeks with us, but had accepted an offer to teach at Grantville, on the LaGrange and West Point Railroad. I had a precious aunt, my mother's sister, Mrs. Annie Watson, whom I loved dearly, and of whom I had not heard a word since the interruption of the mail communication by the siege of Atlanta, and my mother's frequent mention of her determined me to go and see if this beloved aunt was living, and, if so, in what condition. I knew she was one of the favored ones of earth, viewed from a worldly standpoint, but I knew not what changes had come over her or her worldly possessions. Rumor conveyed startling accounts of the atrocious deeds of Wilson's raiders, and I knew that they were operating in that rich cotton belt of Alabama which embraced my aunt's plantation and beautiful home. I could scarcely hope that that home and its valuable appointments had escaped the cupidity of an organized band of robbers protected by the United States Government.

When I think of my mother's fond affection for her children, and her tender solicitude for their welfare, I am constrained to think that she thought I was endowed with a sort of charmed existence not subject

to the perils which beset the pathway of ordinary mortals, and hence her ready aequiescence to my proposition to undertake a journey of many miles under circumstances of imminent danger that inspired her with confidence amounting to certainty that I would be preserved by an All-wise Providence for future usefulness. I had very little preparation to make for the contemplated trip. A pretty, small-checked dress, which had done service through many a changing scene, and was good for as many more, and a hat—well, I beg to be excused from describing it—and gloves upon which I had expended skill in darning until it was difficult to perceive where the darning ceased and the glove began, completed my toilet, and I bade to all appearance a cheerful good-bye to my mother and kind friends, and went by private conveyance to Fairburn. There I took the train for Cowles' Station, Alabama.

Nothing of particular interest transpired on the way. My country was prostrate and bleeding from many lacerations, and my tears flowed so freely that by the time I reached my railroad destination I had a very sick headache. That "there is a providence that shapes our ends" was again illustrated. Some of my aunt's neighbors, who knew me at least by name, were at the station, and kindly offered to carry me to her residence, a distance of ten miles. I found my aunt in feeble health, and all alone save her usual dusky attendant. Her only child, Mrs. Mary E. Seaman, had gone to Tuskeegee to see her little

daughter, who was there going to school in care of a friend and relative, Col. Smith Graham. My closest scrutiny failed to detect any change in my aunt's mode of living. The same retinue of servants came into the house to see and shake hands with mistress' niece, and after many questions about "our white folks in Georgia," retired from my presence with the same courtesy that had marked their demeanor towards me in antebellum days.

My aunt manifested her joy at seeing me in many ways, and wept and smiled alternately, as I related my adventures with the yankees. "And my sister, what was their treatment of her?" My evasive answer, "It could have been worse," heightened her desire to learn particulars, and I told them to her. She was grateful for all leniency shown by them, and affected to tears by unkindness. As the day waned, and the middle of the afternoon came on, my aunt proposed walking "to meet Mary." I supported her fragile form, and guided her footsteps in the best part of the road. How like her beloved sister in Georgia she seemed! Accustomed to this little diversion, for she always went to meet Mary, she had reckoned accurately regarding the time of her daughter's coming, and we had not gone far when we saw the carriage descending a declivity in the distance. Nelson, the coachman, had also recognized "Mistress and Miss Mary," and announced his discovery to my cousin. Increased speed in the gait of the horses soon brought us together, and she opened the door

and stepped to the ground. After kissing her dear mother she encircled me in her arms, and kissed me time and again, and then assisted me into the carriage, and she and her mother followed. I greeted the coachman in a cordial manner, because of past service and present fidelity to "Mistress and my white folks" generally.

With my rapidity in conversation, I could scarcely keep up with my cousin's questions. Happy woman! She had never seen any "Blue Coat," or, in the parlance of the times, "Yankees," and she enjoyed my description of them, especially when in answer to the question, "Do they look like our men?" I attempted to define the difference. It was amusing to me to hear her describe the preparation she made for the coming of Wilson and his raiders.

After reaching home, she left her mother and myself only a few minutes. I scarcely perceived her absence, and yet when she returned the disparity in our dress was not so apparent. The elegant traveling suit had been exchanged for her plainest home attire, and every article of jewelry had disappeared. The brief period spent with these dear relatives was spent in mutual efforts to entertain and amuse each other. My aunt's conversation was like sweet music in which minor chords abounded. Her love for her sister, and apprehension of evil, gave a pathetic turn to every conversation she attempted, and it was evident to me that she had given up all hope of my brother's safety, and her

resignation under similar circumstances was a great support to me.

Much as I enjoyed this luxurious home, and its refined appointments, there was a controlling motive—a nearer tie—that made me willing to again take up the hardships and perils of warfare, and battle for life with that relentless enemy left by Sherman to complete his cruel work, the aforesaid General Starvation.

After many farewell words were spoken, I left my aunt, accompanied by her daughter, who went with me to the station for the purpose of seeing me on the train bound for Fairburn, then the terminus of the railroad. It was past noon when the train left the station, and, in those days of slow railroad locomotion, it was all the afternoon reaching West Point. I learned, before reaching there, that I would have to remain over until the next morning, and, therefore, as soon as I stepped from the cars, started to hunt a place at which to spend the night. Wending my way, solitary and alone, through the twilight, I saw Mr. John Pate, the depot agent at Decatur, coming towards me.

"Oh, Mr. Pate, have you heard anything from ma in the last week?"

"Yes; it went very hard with her, but she was some better this morning."

I did not have to ask another question. I knew it all, and was dumb with grief. The thought that I would never see my darling brother again paralyzed me. I saw him, in the mirror of my soul, in all the

periods of his existence. The beautiful little baby boy, looking at me the first time out of his heavenly blue eyes, and his second look, as if not satisfied with the first, followed by the suggestion of a smile. Ah, that smile! It had never failed me through successive years and varying scenes. The boyhood and youth—honest, truthful and generous to a fault—and the noble, genial manhood, had all developed within my recollection, and I loved him with an intensity bordering on idolatry. These scenes and many others rushed through my mind with kaleidoscopic rapidity and made me so dizzy that I had no knowledge of how I reached the "hotel." My heart cried and refused to be comforted. From the consolations of religion and patriotism it recoiled and cried all the more. A great tie of nature had been sundered, and the heart, bruised and crushed and bleeding, pulsated still with vitality that would have flickered out but for the hope of giving comfort to the poor bereaved mother and sister in our great sorrow. Good ladies bathed my throbbing temples and kissed my cheeks and spoke comforting words, for they were all drinking the bitter waters of Marah, and knew how to reach the heart and speak of the balm of Gilead.

"Killed on the battle field, thirty steps from the breast-works at Franklin, Tennessee, November 30th, 1864," was the definite information regarding my brother's death, left for me by Mr. Pate.

Interminable as the darkness of night appeared, it at length gave way to the light of day, and I was

ready with its dawn to take the train. But, oh, the weight of this grief that was crushing me! Had the serpents which attacked Laocoon, and crushed him to death by their dreadful strength, reached out and embraced me in their complicated folds, I could not have writhed in greater agony. I did not believe it was God's will that my brother should die, and I could not not say to that Holy Being, "Thy will be done." In some way I felt a complicity in his death —a sort of personal responsibility. When my brother wrote to me from his adopted home in Texas that, having voted for secession, he believed it to be his duty to face the dangers involved by that step, and fight for the principles of self-government vouchsafed by the Constitution of the United States, I said nothing in reply to discourage him, but rather I indicated that if I were eligible I should enter the contest. These, and such as these were the harrowing reflections which accused me of personal responsibility for the demon of war entering our household and carrying off the hope and prop of a widowed mother.

I found my poor, stricken mother almost prostrated. The tidings of her son's tragic death did the work apprehended by all who knew her nervous temperament. Outwardly calm and resigned, yet almost paralyzed by the blow, she was being tenderly cared for by our saintly neighbor, Mrs. Ami Williams, and her family, who will always be held in grateful remembrance by her daughters.

CHAPTER XX.

MY MOTHER'S DEATH.

Rev. Dr. John S. Wilson, performs the funeral service.

In sympathy with a disappointed people who had staked all and lost all in the vain effort to defend the inherited rights of freemen, and had not yet rallied from the depression occasioned by defeat, the spring of 1866 had withheld her charms, and, instead of donning a mantle of green, decorated with pansies, violets and primroses, hyacinths, bluebells and daffodils, verbenas, phlox and geraniums, and bloom of vine and briar in endless variety, the first day of April found her wounded, bleeding bosom, wrapped in the habiliments of sorrow and despondency. A few brave old apple trees, as if to encourage the more timid, had budded and blossomed and sent forth sweet fragrance as of yore, and a few daring sprigs of grass suggested spring time and sunny skies. Loneliness, oppressive and melancholy, and a spirit of unrest, prompted me to go to the depot in quest of something that never came, and my sister had stepped over to our neighbor, Mrs. Williams'.

Our mother loved the springtime. It had always been her favorite season of the year. Fifty-nine ver-

nal sons had brought inspiration and hope to her sensitive tender heart, and given impulse to a checkered life; but now no day star of hope shed its effulgence for her. As I mentioned in a former sketch, her only son had fallen mortally wounded upon the sanguinary battlefield of Franklin, and she had never recovered from the shock.

After a few months of patient endurance, an attack of paralysis had occurred, and during many days life and death contended for the victory. But the skill of good physicians, among them Doctor Joseph P. Logan, and faithful efficient nursing, aided in giving her a comfortable state of health lasting through several months. But the fiat had gone forth, and now after a pathetic survey of earth, mingled with thankfulness even then to the God of the springtime, she succumbed to the inevitable.

Returning from the depot, I espied in the distance the approaching figure of Telitha. As she came up to me she was the very picture af despair. With one hand clasped to her head, she fell on the ground and lay as if dead for a moment. My worst apprehensions were more than realized. I found my mother speechless, and never more heard her voice—never more heard any sound emanating from her lips except labored heavy breathing. It was all so sudden and strange and sad, I cannot describe it. Neighbors and friends came in by the score, and did all they could to mitigate our great sorrow. "Johnnie" Hardeman stayed until all was over, and mother never received

from loving son kinder care or more unremitting attention. Paul Winn also remained and manifested deep sympathy, and so did other neighbors. Oh, the sorrow, the poignant sorrow, to see a mother in the embrace of death, and to have no power over the monster! About thirty hours of unconsciousness, and, without a struggle, "life's fitful dream was over," about 9 o'clock p. m., April 1st, 1866. The silent hush that ensued was sacred, and scarcely broken by the sobs of those most deeply afflicted.

Loving hands fashioned a shroud, and a beautiful casket was obtained from Atlanta. When all was done, and our mother arrayed for the tomb, she looked like the bride of Heaven. I gazed long and earnestly upon her face and figure, and went away and came back, and gazed again admiringly. For every lineament was formed in a mold that compelled admiration.

During the two days that she lay there, I often lingered by her side; and I recalled the many scenes, oftimes perilous and sad, and oft times joyous and gay, through which we had gone together. Although a wee bit girl, scarcely turned in my fifth year at the time of my mother's second marriage, I remembered her as a bride. I remembered our journey by gig and wagon to Cassville, then, paradoxical as it may sound now, situated in the heart of a wilderness of beauty and savagery. The war-whoop of an uncivilized race of Indians, justly angry and resentful, reverberated through the impenetrable forest that belted the

little settlement of white people that had the hardihood and bravery to make their homes among them. I remembered how she soon became a favorite, and was beloved by every one in that sparsely settled locality, and won even the hearts of the Indians, by kindness towards them. She taught them how to make frocks and shirts, and clothes for their children, for the Cherokees were an ambitious people, and aspired to assimilation with the white race; and, to please them, she learned to bead moccasins, and other articles ornamental and useful, just as they did. She also learned their alphabet, and became able to instruct them in their own language.

I remembered how she had always worked for the poor; not so much in societies, (where the good that is accomplished in one way is often more than counterbalanced by the harm that is done in others,) as in the quiet of her own home, and in the humble habitations of God's poor. I remembered, with a melancholy thrill, how she had worked for our soldiers, and had not withheld good deeds from an invading, alien army. Reverently I took in mine her little, symmetrical hand, as it lay peacefully over the heart that had ever beat in unison with all that was good. It was weather-beaten, and I could feel the rough places on the palm through the pretty white silk glove in which it was encased. Cold and stark in death, it gave no responsive pressure to my own. I thought of its past service to me in which it never tired. It had trained my own from the rudimentary "straight

lines" and "pot hooks," through all the intricacies of skilled penmanship; and from the picturesque letters on a sampler to the complete stitches of advanced embroidery. The little motionless hand that I now held in my own had picked corn from cracks and crevices in bureau drawers, which served as troughs for Garrard's cavalry horses, to make bread with which to appease her hunger and mine. I gazed upon the pallid face, and finely chiseled features. The nose never seemed so perfect, or the brow so fair, or the snow-white hair so beautiful. The daintiest of mull caps heightened the effect of the perfect combination of feature, placidity and intellectual expression. I fancied I had never seen her look so beautiful, and felt that it was meet that we should lay her away in a tomb where she could rest undisturbed until the resurrection morn, not doubting that the verdict of a great and good God would assign her a place among his chosen ones.

Soothing to our bruised hearts was the sweet singing of those who watched at night beside her lifeless form. With gratitude we remember them still: Laura and Mary Williams, Emma and John Kirkpatrick, Josiah Willard and John McKoy. One of the hymns they sang was, "Jerusalem, my happy home."

The hour for the funeral service came. Friends and neighbors and fellow-citizens had been assembling for several hours, and now the house was full, and the yard was thronged. Where did this concourse of

people come from, old men, war-stricken veterans, and a few young men who had survived the bloody conflict that had decimated the youth of the South, and boys and women and girls? All alike came to pay respect to the deceased friend, and to show sympathy for the bereaved and lonely sisters. That sainted man and friend of ours, Rev. John S. Wilson, took his stand near the casket, and we sat near him, and those who loved us best got very near to us. Ah, well do I remember them! I could call each by name now, and the order in which they came. An impressive silence ensued, broken by the man of God uttering in hopeful intonation and animated manner, "She is not dead, but sleepeth," and a sermon followed upon the resurrection of God's people, never surpassed in interest and pathos. All felt the power of his theme, and the eloquence of his words. He also spoke of the humble modesty of his friend, who had counted herself least in the congregation of the righteous, and dispensed favors to others in an unobtrusive manner, and who practically illustrated the divine command: "Do unto others, as ye would that others should do unto you." This beautiful funeral tribute was succeeded by the hymn—

"Rock of ages, cleft for me,"

which was sung with an unction which none but Christians can feel.

The last earthly look, solemn and earnest, was taken of our long-suffering, patient, loving mother, and everybody in the house followed our example and

gazed reverently upon the pretty face, cold in death. And then the pall-bearers, "Johnnie" Kirkpatrick, "Johnnie" Hardeman, Virgil Wilson, and Mr. G. W. Houston bore her to the grave.

With uncovered head, and gray locks fluttering in the vernal breeze, Dr. Wilson repeated the beautiful burial service of the Presbyterian Church. I can never describe the utter desolation of feeling I experienced as I stood clasped in the arms of my sister, and heard the first spade full of earth fall over the remains of our loved one.

But we had heard above all the glorious words, "This mortal shall put on immortality," and "O, death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

CHAPTER XXI.

A REMINISCENCE.

"Sister, you are not paying any attention whatever to my reading, and you are losing the most beautiful thoughts in this delightful book."

"Yes, and I am sorry to do so; but I think I see one of Rachel's children—Madaline or Frances."

My sister closed her book and, looking in the direction indicated, agreed with me that the negro woman, clothed in the habiliments of widowhood, who was coming up the avenue with a little boy by her side and one in her arms, was one of Rachel's children; and, although she was scarcely in her teens when she went away, she was a mother now, and traces of care were visible in every lineament of her face. I recognized her, however, as Rachel's youngest daughter, Frances, and went to meet her.

"Is that you, Frances?" I asked.

"Yes, Miss Mary, this is me; your same nigger Frances, and these are my children."

"I am glad to see you and your children;" and I extended my hand in genuine cordiality to her who had once been a slave in my mother's family, and I bade her welcome to her old home. Frances was too

demonstrative to be satisfied with simply hand clasping, and, putting her boy on the ground, she threw her arms round me and literally overwhelmed me with kisses. My hands, neck and face were covered with them, and she picked me up and carried me in her arms to the house, her children following in amazed astonishment. She now turned her attention to them, and, after deliberately shaking the wrinkles out of their clothes, she as deliberately introduced them to me. The older of the two she introduced as "King by name," and the younger as "Lewis by name."

"You see, Miss Mary, I named my children King and Lewis 'cause my white folks named my brothers King and Lewis."

The ceremony of introducing her sons to *her* old *white folks* being performed to her satisfaction, she again turned her attention to me, and again literally overwhelmed me with caresses.

Entering the house, I asked Frances and her children to come in, too.

"Miss Mary, whar's Miss Polly?"

"Have you not heard, Frances, that Ma is dead?"

"Seem to me I has heard somethin' about it, but some how I didn't believe it. And my poor Miss Polly is dead! Well she aint dead, but she's gone to heaven."

And Frances became quite hysterical in demonstrations of brief.

"And Mars Thomie, what about him, Miss Mary?"

"He was killed by the enemy at Franklin, Tenn., the 30th of Nov., 1864."

"Miss Mary, did them old Yankees kill him?"

"Yes, he was killed in battle."

And again, whether sincere or affected, Frances became hysterical in demonstrations of grief.

"Miss Mary, whar's Miss Missouri? Is she dead too?"

"No, that was she who was sitting in the portico with me as you were coming up the avenue. She always has to go off and compose herself before meeting any of you—Ma was that way, too—I suppose you remind her of happier days, and the contrast is so sad that she is overcome by grief and has to get relief in tears."

"Yes'm, I have to cry, too, and it does me a monstrous heap of good. I know its mighty childish, but I jest can't help it. Jest to think all my white folks is done dead but Miss Mary and Miss Missouri!"

"Our brother left a dear little boy in Texas, and I am going after him next winter. He and his mother are going to live with us, and then we will not be so lonely."

"That's so, Miss Mary."

Frances and her children having partaken of a bountiful supper, she resumed, with renewed vigor, her erratic conversation, which consisted, chiefly, of innumerable questions, interspersed with much miraculous information regarding herself since she left her white folks and became a wife, a mother, and a widow.

"Miss Mary, whar's my children going to sleep to-night?"

"With your help I will provide a comfortable place for them, and, also, for you."

And taking a lantern and leading the way to the kitchen, I entered and pointed to a light bedstead, and told her to carry a portion of it at a time to my room, and we would put it up in there.

"Same old room, jest like it was when me and my mammy use to sleep in it.

"Well, things do look mighty nateral if it has been a long time since I seed it.

"And Miss Mary is a going to let me and my children sleep in her room. Well!"

The bedstead having been placed in position, a mattress and bed clothing were furnished. And soon the little negro children were soundly sleeping under the protecting roof of their mother's former young mistresses.

"Whar's your teakettle, Miss Mary?" Having been told where to find it, Frances took it to the well and filled it with water, and, by adding a little more fuel to the fire, soon had it boiling.

"Whar's your bath tub, Miss Mary?"

That too was soon produced and supplied with hot water, reduced to proper temperature. Memories of the past left no doubt in my mind as to the use to which the water was to be applied, and I determined to gratify every fancy that would give pleasure to our former hand maid, and, therefore, I made no resist-

ance when garters were unbuckled, shoes and stockings removed, and feet tenderly lifted into the tub. She knew just how long to keep them there, and how to manipulate them so as to give the most satisfaction and enjoyment; and how to dry them—a very important process. And then the shoes and stockings were again put on, and giving me an affectionate pat on the head she told me to sit still until she told me to move.

"Now, whar's your comb and brush?"

The force of habit must have impelled her to ask this question, as, without awaiting an answer, she went to the bureau and got the articles about which she had asked, and in a few moments she had my long, luxuriant black hair, uncoiled and flowing over my shoulders. She was delighted; she combed and braided it, and unbraided and combed it again and again, and finally, as if reluctant to do so, arranged it for the night.

"Now, whar's your gown?" "You will find it hanging in the ward-robe."

Having undressed me, Frances insisted upon putting the gown on me, and then wanted to carry and put me in bed; this service, however, I declined with thanks. All these gentle manipulations had a soporific effect upon me, and I feign would have slept, but no such pleasure was in store for me. Frances had an axe to grind, and I had to turn the grindstone, or incur her displeasure. Mark her proposition:

"Miss Mary, I come to give you my children."

"Your what?"

"My children, these smart little boys. I'll go with you to the court-house in the mornin', and you can have the papers drawed up and I'll sign 'em, and these little niggers will belong to you 'til they's of age to do for theyselves; and all I'll ever ask you to do for me for 'em is to raise them like my Miss Polly raised me."

"That you should be willing to give your children away, Frances, surprises me exceedingly. If you are without a home, and would like to come here and live, I will do all I can for you and your children. The kitchen is not occupied, only as a lumber or baggage room, and you can have that without paying rent; and you can take care of the cow and have all you can make off of her milk and butter, except just enough for the table use of two; and you can have a garden without paying rent, and many other favors—indeed, I will favor you in every possible way."

"Well, I tell you how it is, Miss Mary. You see, Mammy wants to open up a laundry, and she wants me to help her. She's done 'gaged several womens to help her, and she wants me to go in with her sorter as a partner, you see. And I wants to get my children a good home, for you knows if I had to take care of 'em I couldn't do much in a laundry."

"And you want me to take care of them?"

"Yes'm, just like you use to take care of your own little niggers before freedom, and after I sign the papers they'll belong to you, *don't you know?*"

"I am sorry to disappoint you, Frances, but I cannot accept your offer."

"If slavery were restored and every negro on the American continent were offered to me, I should spurn the offer, and prefer poverty rather than assume the cares and perplexities of the ownership of a people who have shown very little gratitude for what has been done for them." Without seeming to notice the last sentence, Frances exclaimed:

"Well, it's mighty strange. White folks used to love little niggers, and now they won't have 'em as a gracious gift."

Under the cover of night she had made her proposition and received her disappointment, after which she lay down beside her children and was soon sleeping at the rate of 2:40 per hour, if computed by the snoring she kept up. In due time morning, cheerful, sunlighted morning came, and with it many benign influences and good resolutions for the day.

Frances asked where everything was, and having ascertained, went to work and soon had a nice appetizing breakfast for us, as well as for herself and children. After that important meal had been enjoyed, she inquired about the trains on the Georgia railroad, and asked what time she could go into Atlanta. I told her she could go at nine o'clock, but I preferred that she should stay until twelve o'clock, m.

"Miss Mary, what was in that trunk I saw in the kitchen last night?"

"I scarcely know, odds and ends put there for safe keeping, I suppose."

"May I have the trunk and the odds and ends in it? They can't be much, or they wouldn't be put off there."

"We will go and see." Again I took the kitchen key, and the trunk key as well, and having unlocked both receptacles, I told Frances to turn the contents of the trunk out upon the floor. When she saw them I noticed her disappointment, and I told her to remain there until I called her. I went in the house and got a pair of sheets, a pair of blankets, a quilt, several dresses and underclothing, and many things that she could make useful for her children, and put them together, and then called her and told her to take them and put them in the trunk.

"Look here, Miss Mary, you aint going to give me all them things, is you?"

"Yes, put them in the trunk and lock it."

A large sack of apples, a gift also, was soon gathered and a boy engaged to carry it and the trunk over to the depot in a wheelbarrow. Promptly at half past eleven o'clock the trunk and apples, and Frances and her little boys, were on the way to the depot, en route to Atlanta, their future home, and even a synopsis of the subsequent achievements of that woman and her unlettered mother would be suggestive of Munchausen.

TO THE READER,

Who has kindly perused these sketches, I would say, as they have already attained length and breadth not anticipated from the beginning, I will withhold the sequels to many of them for, perhaps, another volume of reminiscences.

Were I possessed of the Sam Weller genius and versatility, and the happy faculty of making the reader wish I had written more, I would throw open the doors of the store house of my war memories, a structure as capacious as the "Southern Confederacy" and canopied by the firmament, and invite the public to enter and share with me the treasures hidden there. The corruscations of wit, and the profound displays of wisdom, by those who donned Confederate gray and went forth in manhood's prime to battle for the principles of their country, would employ the minds and feast the intellect of the most erudite. The living glowing pictures hanging upon the wall which delineate the mysteries of humanity in all its varied forms, and, by example, demonstrate that we often spurn with holy horror that which is better far than that which we embrace with all the fervor of affection; I would resurrect the loftiest patriotism from the most humble graves in the Southern land, and

prove by heroic deeds and noble acts that valor on the battlefield was as often illustrated by the humble soldier whose name has not been preserved in "storied urn," as by the gallant son of chivalrous ancestors who commanded the applause of an admiring multitude. I would place by the side of those greatest of chieftains, Robert E. Lee, and our impregnable "Stonewall" Jackson, and Albert Sydney Johnston, many of our soldiers "unknown to fame," in faded gray jackets and war-worn pants, and challenge the world for the difference. I would dwell with loving interest upon the innumerable sad sweet faces of the mighty throng of bereaved mothers, sisters and aunts, out of whose lives all the light had gone out, and who, though hopeless, uttered no word of complaint against our cause or its leaders, but toiled on with unswerving faith and souls that borrowed the lustre of heaven. All these sad things in my gallery I would recreate in living form and glowing color. And, saddest of all, I would live over with them that melancholy period when the very few, comparatively, that were left of the noble band of defenders of our principles, came back, not with buoyant step and victor crown, but with blighted hopes and despondent mien to desolated homes and decimated families. Under the new regime I would tell of despair and suicide, of hope and energy and success; I would tell how I have lived in this gallery—this *deserted hall*—its silent occupants my companions and friends, my inspiration to useful deeds. There is not a day

that I do not arouse by muffled tread the slumbering echoes of this past, and look upon the cherished souvenirs of the patriotic friends now roaming the beautiful gardens of Paradise, or sleeping the mystic waiting of the resurrection. I ponder upon their lives, their ambitions, their disappointments, and it requires no effort of the imagination to animate those dead forms and invest them with living attributes. And daily, in imagination I weave for them a laurel crown that shall grow greener and greener, as the cycles of Time speed on to Eternity.


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